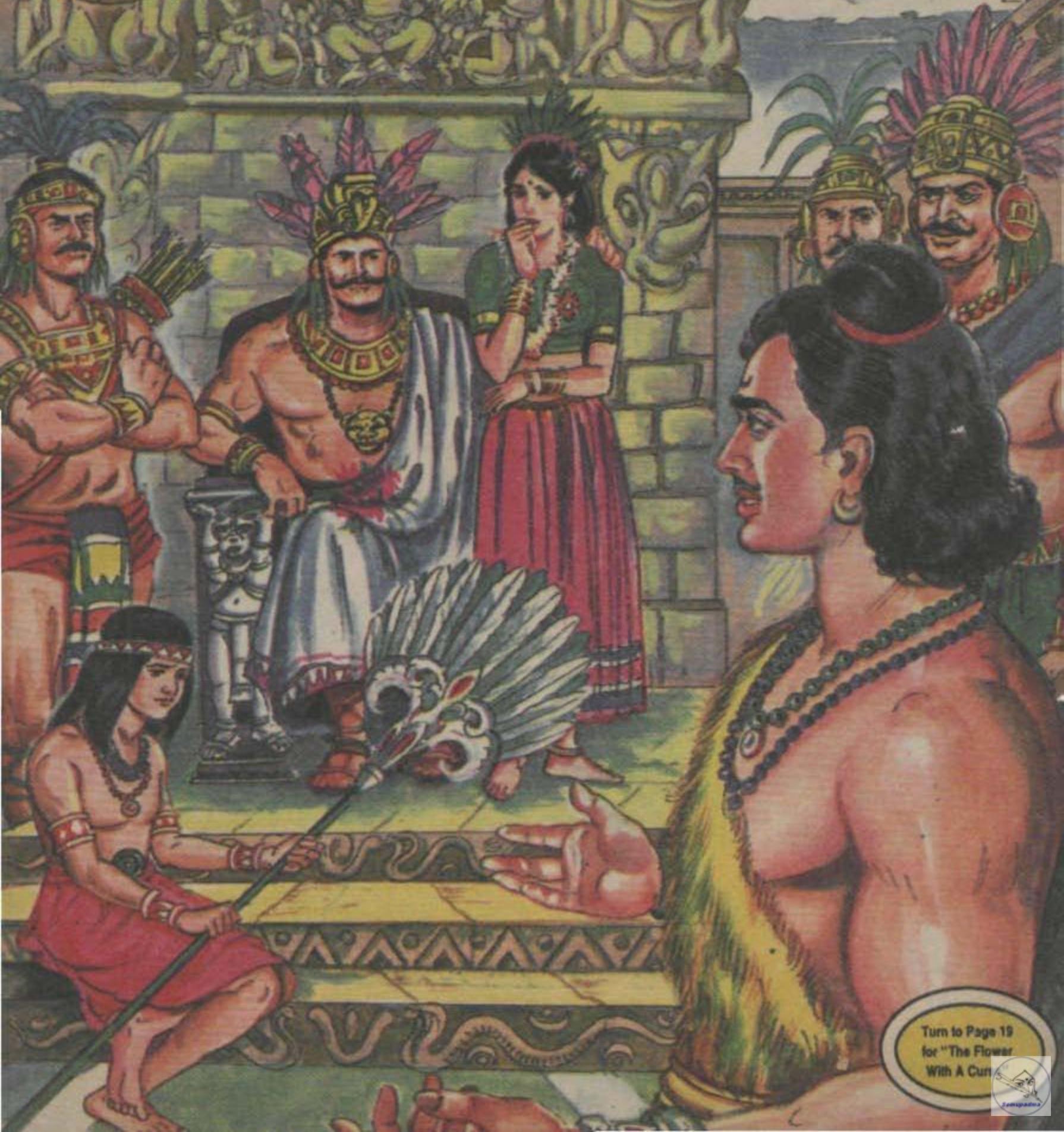


CHANDAMAMA

NOVEMBER 1993

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Turn to Page 19
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With A Curve"





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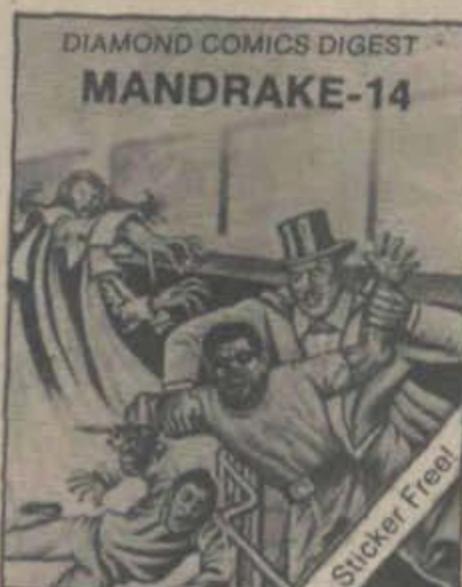
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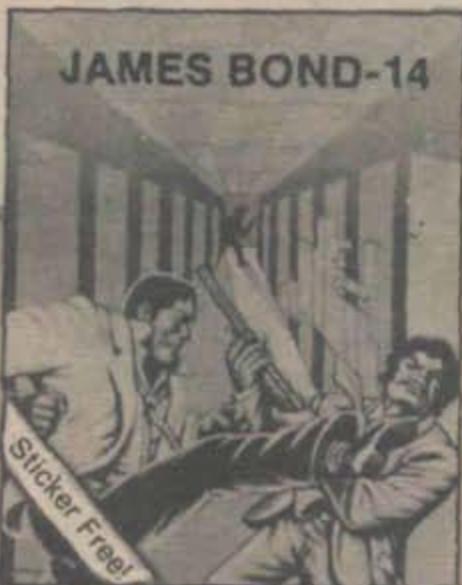
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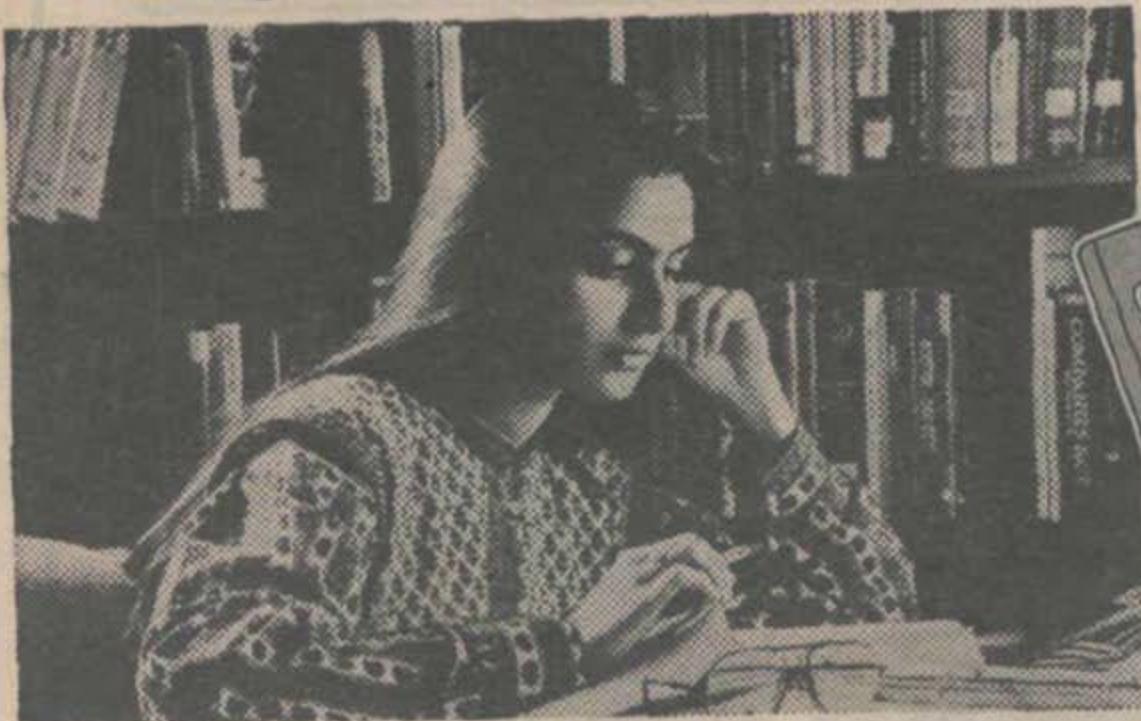
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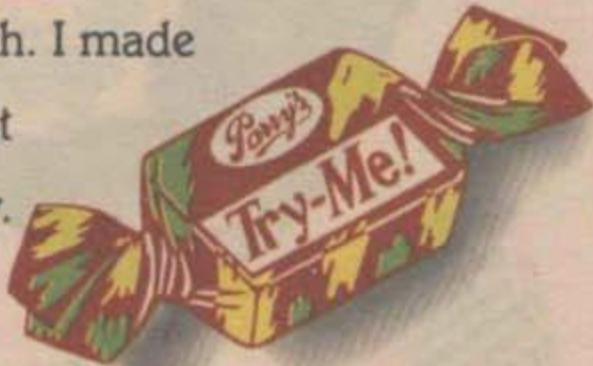


Go ahead
try-me!



I remember
the day we
moved into our
new home. The boys
and girls on the block looked
like they were having
'hazaar' fun. But no, they didn't
look too interested in me.

How do you walk up to a new gang and
make them your pals? Think...Think. So
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CHANDAMAMA

IN THIS ISSUE

Vol. 24 NOVEMBER 1993 No. 5

Stories:

Advice Accepted	...Page 13
The Flower With A Curse-8	...Page 19
No Pity, No Pardon	...Page 28
Strangers In The Forest	...Page 37
Divinity In Art	...Page 43
Veer Hanuman-38	...Page 54
A Poetic View	...Page 60

Picture Stories :

Panchatantra-35	...Page 14
Humiliation By Britain, Honour In India	...Page 62

Features :

The Big Bang	...Page 10
Mother Earth	...Page 27
Supplement-61	...Page 33
World of Nature	...Page 42
Sports Snippets	...Page 52

And News Flash, Let Us Know
and More!

NEXT ISSUE

Vol. 24 DECEMBER 1993 No. 6

THE FLOWER WITH A CURSE : Thangal is surprised when he is called to the princess's apartments. More surprise is in store for him when Mallika wishes to know about the curse on the flower, and the monster who is after the flower. Evidently, she has been listening to his conversation with King Mahendra Singh. She gains Thangal's confidence and tells him of the plot in Nagapura to oust her father. She seeks his help in thwarting the conspiracy and urges him to stay back in the palace.

VEER HANUMAN : His coronation over, Rama begins consultations with his ministers, who complain to him of the people's reluctance to pay taxes. Lakshmana and Hanuman visit the temple of Dharmadevata, the goddess of Justice. On their return, they place a huge balance in the palace courtyard and ask the people to place enough gold coins to match the weight of a pumpkin. They are surprised. It is no ordinary balance, but seems to have some divine qualities. The goddess appears before Rama.

ALL BECAUSE OF A KICK : The kick is given by Bheem Babu the washerman, who is horrified to realise that he has kicked a tiger! But it catapults him to the post of a commander. That is "the lighter side" of the story.

PLUS your favourites and other regular features.

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Literacy: India an example for U.S.A.

Mahatma Gandhi, in his younger days, became a Barrister and practised in South Africa, and not in India. Like him, many Indians studied abroad; and several of them took up employment outside India. The pattern has more or less continued though, of late, a large number of people obtain high qualifications *in India* but go abroad in search of work. This has led to serious discussions on what has been termed as "brain-drain" and the advisability to stop the 'drain', so that the 'brains' are available for the development and progress of India.

There is so much talk about the lure of the West—the U.S.A., mainly, as well as Britain and some of the leading European countries. They are all "advanced" or developed countries, while India is one of the 'developing' nations.

Some shocking revelations have recently come to light about the U.S.A., which many people have till now believed to be far ahead of any other "prosperous" nation. We are told that almost half of its adult population has very "limited skills" in reading and writing. In mathematics, they are almost a "zero".

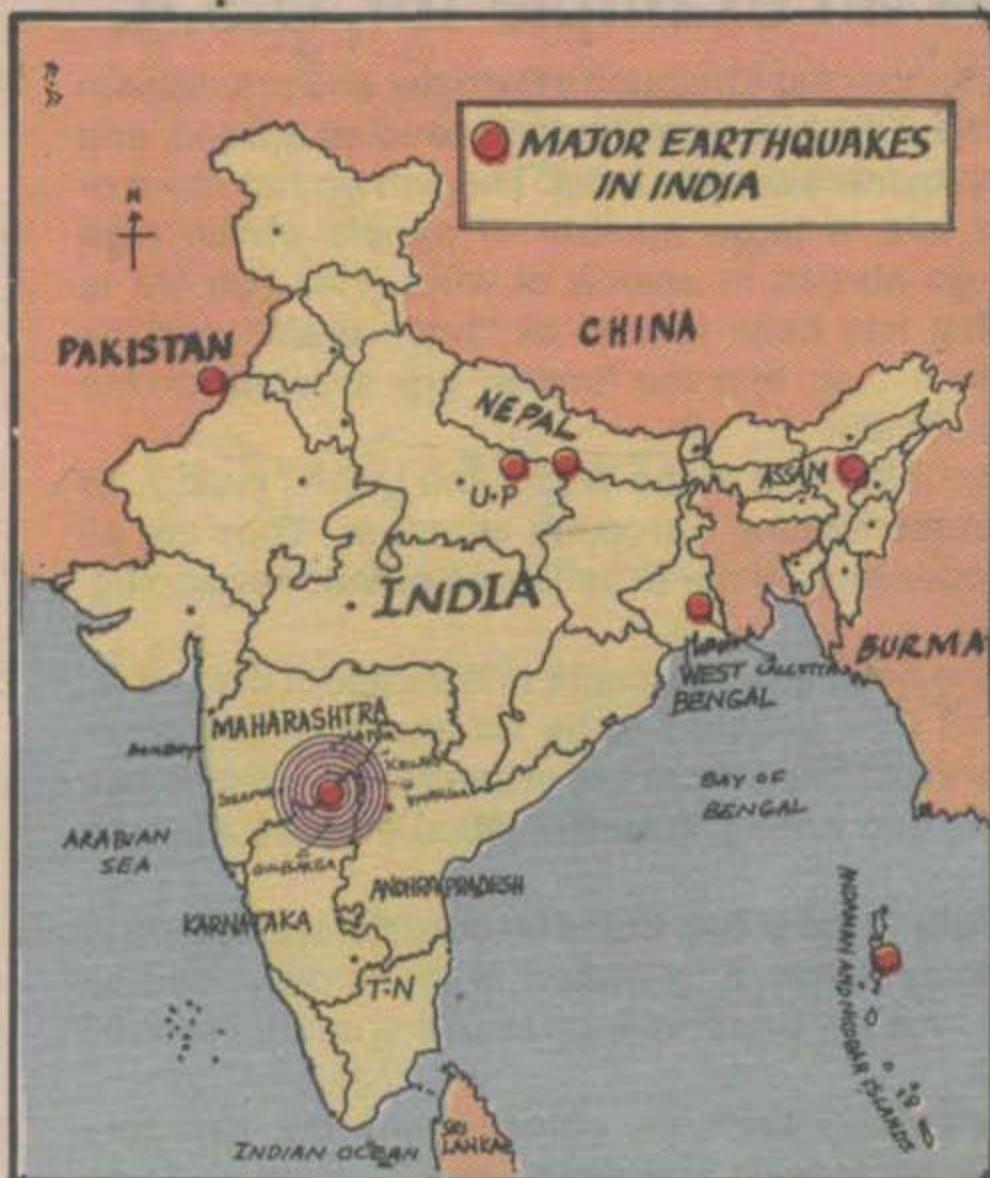
There are 191,000,000 adults in the U.S.A. Some 90,000,000 of them are in the two lowest five proficiency levels. Fifty million of them, described as "worst" by a survey by the Education Department, it appears, cannot even fill up a simple form.

In short, half of our American 'brethren' come under the category "illiterates". Small wonder then, Indians and quite a few from other Asian countries are prized high in the U.S.A.

In recent times, India has been striving to remove illiteracy from the land; cities, districts, and states vie with each other in announcing higher literacy levels. Adult literacy programmes and 'each one—teach one' projects have had large-scale successes in India. These Indian experiments can very well be emulated by the U.S.A.

"Chandamama" wishes its readers a happy "Deepavali"

THE BIG BANG



fell asleep. Some of them, however, decided to spend the rest of the night by chatting, playing cards, or indulging in some form of merriment. Many of them are lucky to be alive today but sad when they recount the tragedy that struck as many as fifty villages and two towns in Marathwada, which were all levelled to the ground by an earthquake that lasted just a few seconds. The time was a few minutes before 4 a.m.

The tremor that was felt in several States south of the Vindhyas was recorded on the Richter scale of a magnitude of 6.5 which, several experts opined, was not severe, but the devastation it caused is generally accepted and described as one of the worst (see box) for India in recent memory. Initial estimates put the number of people who lost their lives at anything between 20,000 and 30,000, and the number of injured at more than a hundred thousand. There was not a single house—in fact, many of them were tiled mud houses—left intact in the entire

Ganesh Chaturthi this year was on September 19. Ten days later came the immersion of the idols, which is celebrated in Maharashtra—like in several other parts of India—with great fervour and enthusiasm.

On September 29 evening, the people of Khillari village in Latur district in the Marathwada region of Maharashtra took the idols in procession, "Ganapati Bappa Morya!" they sang aloud, sang in unison, invoking the blessings of their beloved Lord, urging him to come to them again next year.

They all returned very late and tired, and soon

region. One report said, a whole temple had crumbled down, but the idol of Ganesh was unscathed.

In December 1967, the Koyna dam in Maharashtra had triggered a quake with an intensity of 6.5. The number of lives lost was less than 200. In October 1991, Uttarkashi in U.P. suffered an earthquake (6.1) which affected a population of 80,000 with less than 2,000 of them losing their lives. In the last one year, Khillari is reported to have experienced mild tremors on as many as 125 occasions; still the area was not considered "seismically active" or quake prone. But the killer-quake of September 30 had Khillari as its epicentre.

Individuals and service organisations rushed to the different spots to rescue people and pull out survivors from beneath the debris. The government machinery moved to offer speedy relief by way of food, shelter, clothes, and medicines, besides monetary help. The people of India rose as one man to extend a helping hand and succour. People in other parts of the world, as well as world organisations came forward to rush relief in the shape of money and material. The world shared the agony of the Indian tragedy.

There are scientific theories for earthquakes, which somehow cannot be predicted unlike many other natural calamities. However, there is a simpler theory. When the groundwater recedes, a hollow is created which, in turn, causes cracks in the earth's crust. Man digs deep for water; and indiscriminately cuts trees, the roots of which can hold the earth's crust together. It is, therefore, not surprising that Mother Earth every now and then gets angry with man!

Charles Francis Richter (1900-1985) was a U.S. seismologist who devised a scale (graded from 1 to 10) to measure the *magnitude* of the waves caused by earthquakes. Earlier, the Mercalli scale (called after the Italian seismologist Giuseppe Mercalli, 1850-1914) was used for measuring the *intensity* of an earthquake.

Major Earthquakes

In India

- * October 11, 1737—Calcutta—more than 300,000 lives lost
- * January 15, 1934—Indo-Nepalese border (8.4)—10,000 lives lost
- * May 31, 1935—Quetta (now in Pakistan) (7.5)—nearly 30,000 deaths
- * June 26, 1941—Andamans (8.1)
- * August 15, 1950—Assam (8.5)

World

- * The world's worst earthquake is believed to have taken place in July 1201, in East Mediterranean area, resulting in 1,100,000 deaths.

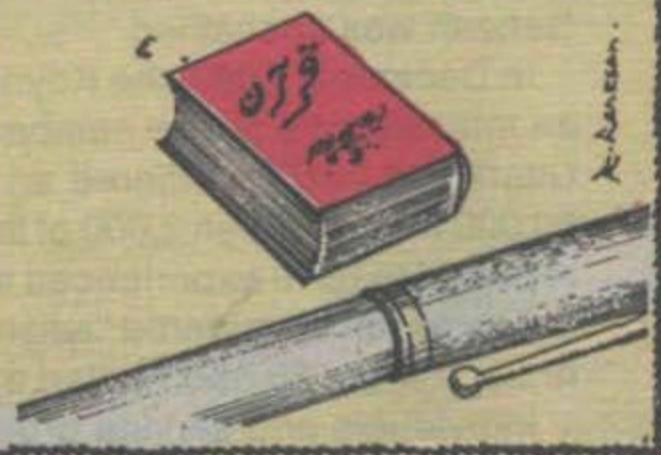


NEWS FLASH



Most minuscule

The tiniest copy of Koran—the holy book of Islam—has been found in the city of Landskrona in Sweden. It is only 2.7 cm thick, and the text is in the original Arabic language. The owner inherited it from his father who, according to him, bought it at an auction some time between 1960 and 1963. Till now, a minuscule copy in China was claimed to be the smallest. The copy in Sweden is awaiting an entry in the Guinness Book.



Ghost 'caught' on video

There are instances of "still" shots being taken of ghosts. Probably for the first ever time, the movements of a ghost have been captured by a video camera. The security guards of the parliament house in the island nation of Fiji were certain that they had seen a ghost roaming the halls. They quickly organised a filming exercise. The tape was later shown to the Prime Minister and the Opposition leader, who approved of its telecast. The shadowy figure is seen moving about in a room. It is wearing traditional Fijian dress, including a sash made of beaten bark.



Death for smallpox

Till a few years ago, it was compulsory for newborn babies to be vaccinated against smallpox. This infectious disease had caused the death of hundreds of thousands of people, about 50 per cent of whom were people below 20 years. Once the virus was isolated, efforts were taken to eradicate the disease from the face of the earth. During the past few years, no new cases have been reported. Specimens of the virus were captured in laboratories for the sake of research. The virus of this killer-disease is now to be destroyed on December 31. The WHO is expected to issue the "death warrant"!

Advice accepted!

King Ugrasen of Abhirampur was a cruel ruler. Whether he was angry or not, he took pleasure in inflicting pain on others and watching them wince in his presence. His minister, Shantiswaroop, took every opportunity to advise him to desist from his cruel habit. But the king did not mend his ways. Fortunately, he had some regard for his minister, so he did not get angry with him!

One day, sage Satyanand was passing through Abhirampur and Shantiswaroop took him to meet the king. Somehow, Ugrasen was attracted by his talk, specially stories from the epics and other holy books, and persuaded him to stay on, listening to his discourse.

"O revered Swamiji" the king said, offering his obeisance. "You're like a *guru* to me. How shall I express my gratitude?"

"I don't desire any gift or title; it will make me happy if the people here are not cruel to others and live in peace. That'll be the best gift you can give me."

Ugrasen immediately sent for the commander. "See that the people do not indulge in violence. Declare it's my order. And if anyone were to disobey, tell them that I'll give them cruel punishment!"

Both Satyanand and Shantiswaroop looked at each other, perplexed.





THE HEART-BROKEN GIRL COULD NOT EVEN BROOK HIS PRESENCE.



MANY A DAY PASSED LIKE THAT. ONE NIGHT, A THIEF ENTERED THEIR HOUSE...



Wealth acquired with a knowledge of the proper means and without foul practices will yield virtue and happiness.—
Thirukkural



The wise are those who know before hand what is going to happen; those who do not know this are unwise.

ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE WAS A POOR BRAHMIN WHO LIVED ON ALMS. ONE DAY ...

— SOMEONE PITIED AND PRESENTED HIM WITH A COUPLE OF CALVES.



AFTER SOME TIME —

I'LL STEAL THOSE TWO CALVES TONIGHT.



AS HE WAS GOING FOR THE THEFT...

I'M SATHYAVAD, THE GHOST. TELL ME, WHO YOU ARE.

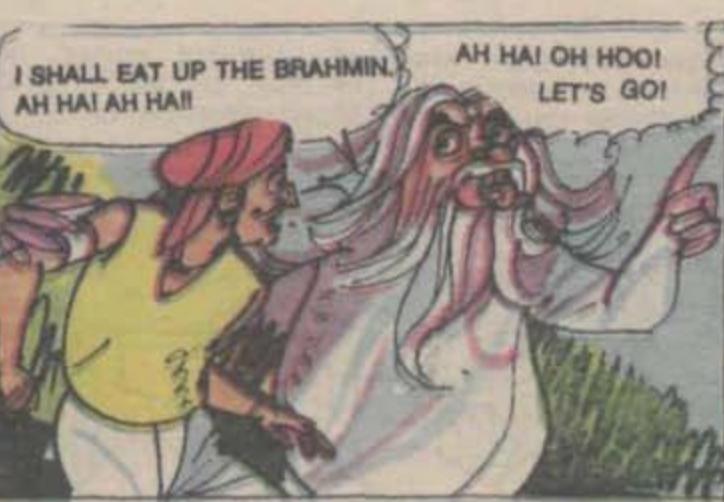


WHO'RE YOU?

I'M A THIEF, GOING TO ROB A BRAHMIN OF HIS TWO CALVES.



IS THAT SO? THEN LET'S GO TOGETHER AND ...



I SHALL EAT UP THE BRAHMIN.
AH HAI AH HAI!

AH HAI OH HOO!
LET'S GO!

THE THIEF AND THE GHOST ARRIVED AT THE BRAHMIN'S HOUSE ...



BROTHER GHOSTI LET'S HIDE HERE TILL THE RIGHT MOMENT COMES.



There is no praise like the praise of never uttering a falsehood; without causing any suffering, it will lead to every virtue.

AFTER SOME TIME...



THE BRAHMIN IS FAST ASLEEP. I SHALL FINISH HIM.



NO, THAT'S BAD! YOU MUST NOT EAT HIM TILL I ROB HIM OF HIS CALVES.



IF YOU TAKE AWAY THE CALVES FIRST, THEY MAY CRY ALOUD AND WAKE UP THE BRAHMIN. IT'LL THEN BE A LOSS TO ME.



NO, NO, IF YOU ATTACK HIM FIRST, SOMETHING MAY HAPPEN TO WAKE HIM UP. THEN ALL MY LABOUR WILL GO WASTE.



I MUST FINISH HIM FIRST!



THE THIEF AND THE GHOST WENT INTO A LOUD AND HEATED ARGUMENT.



WHAT'S ALL THIS HUBBUB? WHO'RE YOU?



MY DEAR SIR, THIS IS A GHOST ABOUT TO EAT YOU!



SIR! HE'S A THIEF COME TO ROB YOU OF YOUR CALVES.



IS IT SO? I SHALL FINISH BOTH OF YOU.



HRAAM! HREEM!!
HROOM!!!

To Continue

If a man is able to cut off all desires, the deeds which confer immortality will come to him—in the path in which he seeks them.

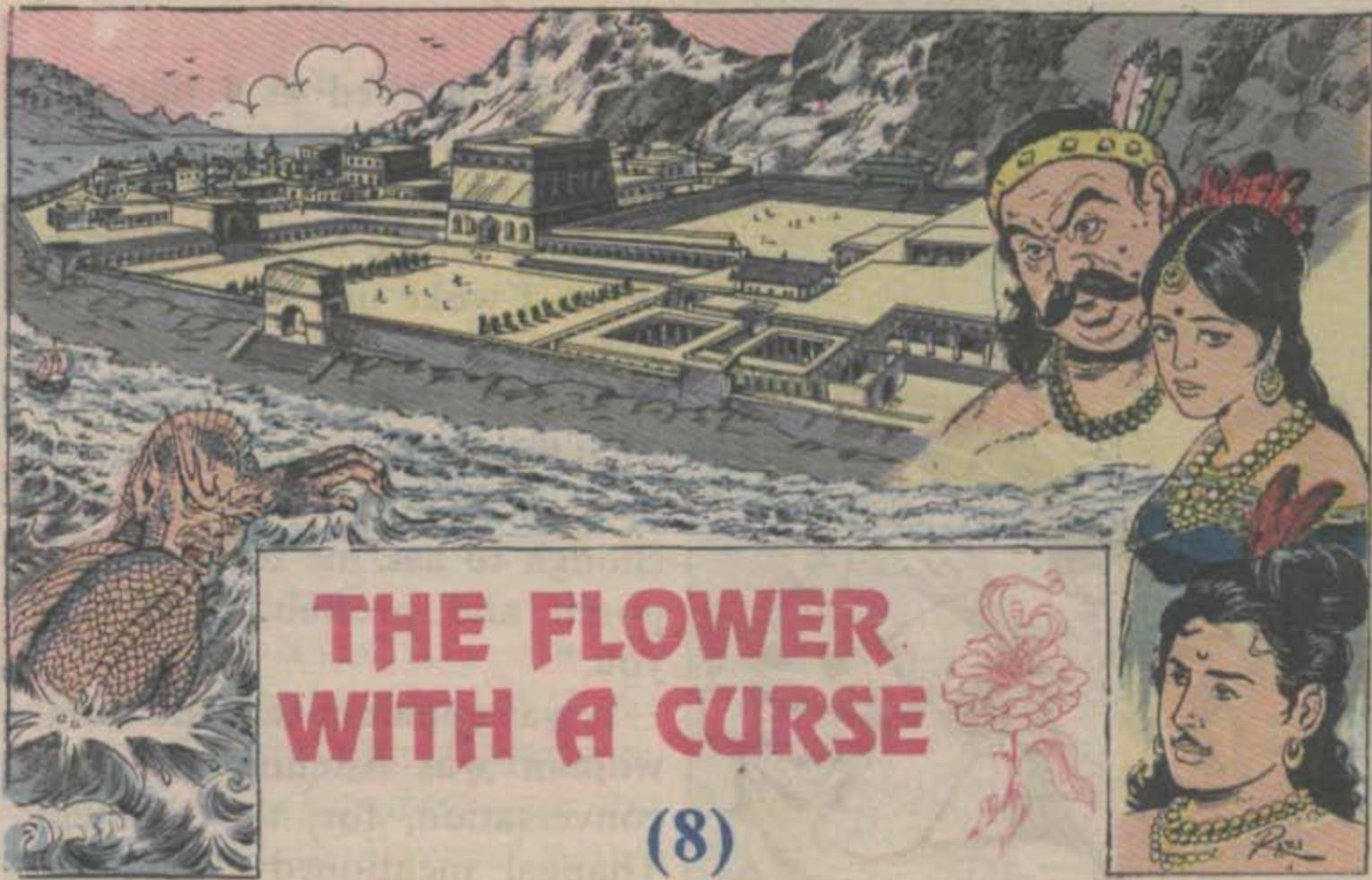


When "stew" becomes unpalatable

Asima Sahoo (of Dhenkanal) and her friends planned to go for a movie that Sunday. Her younger sister pleaded with her to take her along. The girl had feigned illness and skipped a class test only the previous day, in the hope that she would be able to give a better performance in the next test. However, on Sunday, the little one was her bubbling self once again, and Asima took pity on her and agreed to her accompanying the 'elders' to the movie. In the afternoon, the girl's friend telephoned to say that their teacher had insisted on her taking the test that she had missed, on Monday itself. With the test a few hours away, how could she go for a movie? her mother argued. No, she had better remain at home and prepare for the test. As Asima and her friends left for the movie, the little one saw them off with tears in her eyes. "Let her stew in her own juice!" remarked the mother to the hearing of the girls. Asima liked the movie, but she did not enjoy as she had to leave her poor sister at home. All the while she wondered what her mother meant by 'stew,' 'juice' and all that. The idiom is an informal way of saying that one should suffer the consequences of one's own foolish action without help from others. It also means, one does not go to help another when he is in trouble of his own making, but allow him to reap the consequences of his own actions.

Reader Parmita Sumant Bhadra, of Pune, wants to know the difference between 'award' and 'prize.' In their simpler meanings, both are the same—any dictionary will tell us so. However, we can give them a hairline difference! An *award* is generally conferred on someone in recognition of his or her achievement, services, or contribution. The recipient *does not normally compete* for the award. Whereas, a *prize* is usually awarded after a competition. As indicated earlier, there is only a thin difference, if there is a difference at all. For example, none of the recipients *compete* for the Nobel Prize and invariably come to know of the *awards* after they are officially announced.





THE FLOWER WITH A CURSE

(8)



(The tribal youth, Thangal, sets out with the 'Shatabdika' flowers collected from the Nungmai hills. As he rows into the sea, he keeps a watch out and notices the monster rising from the sea. Suddenly, he is in front of tall cliffs and his boat is swept through the lone creek by high rising waves. By then it is dawn again and the monster shies away from the light of day. When Thangal wakes up, he finds himself surrounded by a bevy of tribal belles who speak a strange language. As they take all the flowers that he has brought, he decides to follow them. He guesses that they have led him to the local Chieftain's house...)

So you're from Nungmai?" the Chieftain repeated the question as they sat on the mats spread for them by the tribal woman whom Thangal had heard the girls address as 'Mai'. "How did you come? When? What brought you here?" asked the Chieftain, without waiting for an answer.

"I came on a boat ... in fact, a huge wave tossed us through an opening between the rocks and I landed on the beach there. It was not my intention to come here... I was going somewhere else when..." Thangal was unable to complete his sentence; Mai had by then entered the room with two bowls of drink. She placed

WITH THE KING OF NAGAPURA





them on the floor in front of them and silently went away.

"Please accept our hospitality," said the Chieftain, who then raised the bowl to his lips.

Thangal followed suit. "She was kind enough to give me a drink soon after I came here... no, no, I was brought here."

"Brought? By whom?" the Chieftain asked curiously.

"Let me explain, sir!" Thangal responded, after he had emptied the bowl. "My boat was turned upside down and I was thrown on the ground. It was dawn at that

time. I felt tired as I had left Maninagar in the evening and was rowing all through the night. So, I lay on the beach for a rest. When I woke up, I found some girls standing around me and talking. I could not make out what they were saying. I followed them here and Mai was good enough to ask me to sit on the porch and probably wait for you."

It was apparent that the tribal woman was listening to their conversation, for, the moment Thangal mentioned 'Mai', she made her appearance again. This time she carried a bunch of flowers and placed them in front of the Chieftain. Thangal could only guess what they were telling each other.

"The girls picked them from his boat. Aren't they beautiful?"

"Yes, but why did they take them from the boat?"

"They're so sweet-smelling and the girls couldn't resist the temptation!"

"He said he was going somewhere else; why did he carry flowers in his boat?"

The woman did not give him an answer. She suddenly, with-



drew from the room. Thangal decided that he would not wait for a query from the Chieftain. "They're called 'Shatabdika'. I was taking them to a far-off land. I thought I would rest the whole day and start on my journey again in the evening." Thangal deliberately avoided mentioning anything about the monster or his real mission.

"This is Nagapura, not far away from the kingdom of Maninagar," said the Chieftain. "Which other kingdom were you going to with the flowers? Won't they fade away by the time you reach there?" The Chieftain appeared to be insistent on getting all the details from Thangal.

The tribal youth now decided that he would better reveal everything about his mission. "So, you were trying to entice a *monster* with these flowers? That's really courageous of you, Thangal," remarked the Chieftain, after carefully listening to the youth's narration. "I can assure you, no monster—at least of the kind that you've described—can enter through the creek you've seen. Our kingdom



is guarded by high mountains all around, and unless a monster can climb these mountains and cross over, it cannot enter the kingdom by any other way. In fact, we've been enjoying a peaceful life, as no enemy has dared to step into our kingdom."

"Sir, Nagapura may be very safe and secure that way," said Thangal. "But Maninagar has a long stretch of open beach and the monster had found a way to enter our kingdom and create havoc to the place and people. My aim is to prevent him from coming to Maninagar for all



times. And unless I lead him to a place to enjoy the flowers he is after, the threat of his entry may persist."

"Just now you said, there are no more of these trees in Nungmai hills that can bring forth flowers for several years to come, and that you've cut and carried all the flowers that had bloomed," the Chieftain commented. "Then, why should you fear that the monster may visit Maninagar again?"

"Still I want to lead the monster as far away from Maninagar as possible," said Thangal

determinedly.

"I quite agree with you and very much appreciate your effort, but there must be other methods to achieve the aim than risking your life, Thangal," said the Chieftain, who appeared to be drawn towards the brave tribal youth. "I think this is a matter that we should inform our king and seek his advice. I shall take you to King Mahendrasingh. We will start after we have shared a meal. Mai!" he called out, looking towards the partition door.

Thangal could not make out what they talked, but guessed that it was all about food. He only hoped that the Chieftain would refrain from mentioning anything about the monster or the curse on the flower to his womenfolk.

The woman answering to the call of 'Mai' soon brought food for them. She was helped by the girls whom Thangal had met earlier and who had brought him to the Chieftain's house. He stopped one of the girls as she was about to leave the room. "Chitra!"

"Ba! Did you call me?" she said, as she turned round. It was

then that Thangal noticed her. She was the one who had asked him at the beach whether he would go with them.

"She's my daughter," the Chieftain introduced her. "Where are the others?"

From the door she signalled to her friends. They all trooped in. "They are her friends," said the Chieftain, turning to Thangal. He then asked them something which Thangal could not understand. "Why did you take the flowers from his boat?"

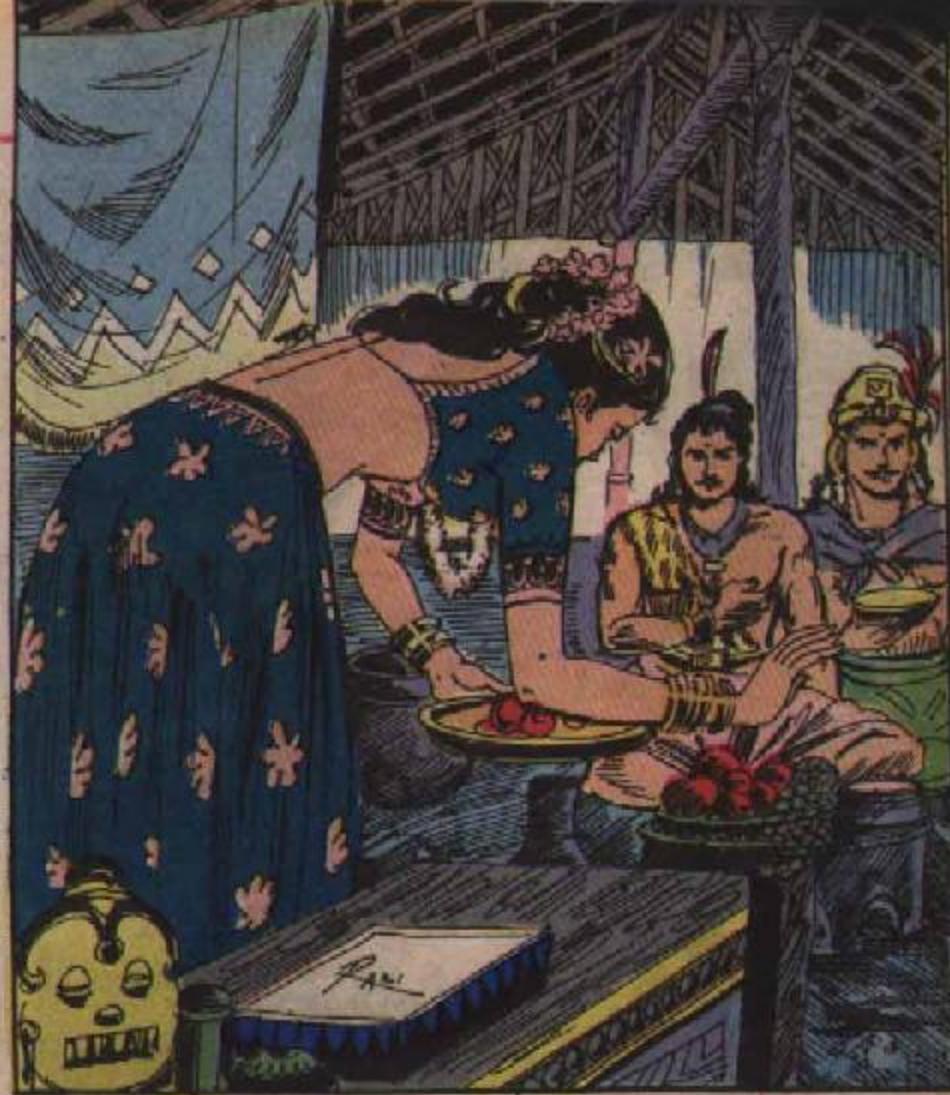
"Kabui! They're lovely flowers, so sweet-smelling!" they replied, giggling and looking at Thangal all the while.

The Chieftain looked at them indulgingly and said, "You may go, but keep the flowers safe. We might have to give them back!"

"Yes, Kabui!" said the girls as they shuffled out of the room.

Thangal by now surmised that by "Kabui", they meant Chief or Chieftain, "Mai" referred to mother—the elderly tribal woman, and "Ba" stood for father in their dialect. He had the satisfaction of having learnt three words!

After having eaten their meal,



the Chieftain and Thangal got ready for their journey. They were alone. Mai, Chitra, and the five other girls had gathered at the porch to see them off. Kabui, who was holding the bunch of flowers brought to him earlier by the tribal woman, handed them to Thangal. "You may keep the bunch with you, along with the saplings. Let's see what the king has to say about them."

The journey was not tiresome, except for some distance when they passed through a rocky terrain involving a short climb. The Chieftain kept their conver-





sation going, by asking several questions about Maninagar, King Pratapavarma, and the Tangkhul tribe. Soon they reached the capital. As they walked along the main streets, people gave them way. Thangal noticed that the Chieftain, in his colourful dress and headgear and holding a decorated but fearsome spear, struck awe in the people. They greeted him "Kabui!" as they stepped aside for him.

At the palace gates, the soldiers saluted him and one of them escorted the Chieftain and Thangal up to the broad verandah

with tall arched pillars. There they were asked to sit down while another soldier went inside to inform the king. Soon he came back to usher them before the king.

Mahendrasingh was sitting on the throne and holding court with his ministers. "Ah! Kabui!" The king extended his hand to the Chieftain after he had saluted the king in tribal fashion by crossing his hands across his chest. "What has brought you to the capital? Is your Khaba tribe being bothered by some enemies?"

Luckily for Thangal, the king and the Chieftain spoke in a language familiar to him. So Kabui was the Chief of the Khaba tribe?

"My tribe holds you in great esteem and reverence, Your Majesty!" said Kabui. "We live in peace and nothing is bothering us right now. This young man is Thangal, of the Tangkhul tribe of Maninagar."

"Maninagar? How's your king, Pratapavarma?" enquired Mahendrasingh.

Thangal, too, crossed his arms across his chest in salutation before answering the king's



questions. By then, the palace attendants had brought two stools and Mahendrasingh signalled them to be seated.

"Your Majesty, it is by accident that Thangal strayed into our kingdom in his boat," said Kabui by way of explanation. He then took the bunch of "Shatabdika" from Thangal and gave the flowers to the king.

"Ah! I caught the smell as you came in, but I didn't know it was from these flowers!" remarked Mahendrasingh. "They're lovely! From where did you get them, Kabui?"

"Thangal brought them from the Nungmai hills in Maninagar. The flowers have bloomed after a hundred years!"

"You said this young man came in a boat? He came all the way here to give us the flowers?" the king evinced surprise. "Has King Pratapavarma sent them to us?"

"Let me explain, Your Majesty!" Kabui interrupted him. And he went on to tell him all that he heard from Thangal—about the curse on the flower and of the monster, and how Thangal had set out in search of the monster and how it had followed

him to Nagapura and had disappeared at the break of dawn.

"From what you've told me, Kabui," remarked Mahendrasingh, "it is a sea-monster and he cannot get into our land through the only opening in the cliffs. As some of the flowers have flowed onto the sea, they may reach the monster and he'll be satisfied at least for the time being. However, we've to consider the possibility of his trying to come here later, now that the rest of the flowers have reached our territory. Kabui, I'm not at all scared of the monster, but I must tell you, I'm yet to meet a more daring young man in my life than Thangal!" The king extended his hand as an indication of his appreciation and admiration. "You should not venture out alone, young man. I'll arrange for my men to go with you to meet the monster!"

Unaware of them, a young girl had been watching the proceedings in the court. "Father! What flowers are they? They're beautiful!" She approached him and the king caught her affectionately.

"They're called 'Shatabdika', my dear," said the king. "This



young man brought them for you from Maninagar."

"You brought them for me?" the girl asked him a direct question, unbelievingly.

Thangal fumbled for an answer. "She's my daughter, Mallika. She's very fond of flowers," the king butted in by way of introduction.

"Yes, princess, I brought them for you," Thangal now gathered his wits to answer her. "Do you like them?"

"I do like them," said Mallika coyly. "Can I take them to my room, father?"

"Yes, my dear, you take them. We're now discussing some serious affairs; I shall join you and your mother later," the king sent her away and then turned to the others. "She need not know about the curse or the monster," he cautioned them. "Kabui, Than-

gal, you stay here for a day, and we shall take certain decisions tomorrow," Mahendrasingh rose to retire to his chambers.

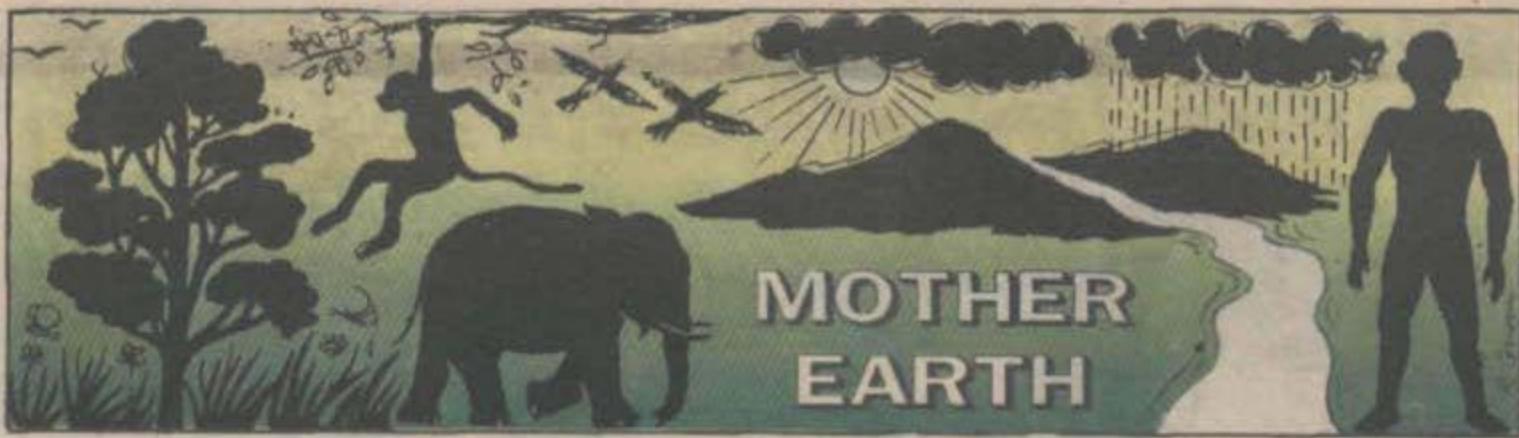
The ministers, Kabui, and Thangal remained standing till the king left the court. "Both of you, please follow me. I'll take you to where you will stay till the king calls for you again," said one of the ministers, and they followed him.

It was not the king who sent for Thangal. They had hardly settled down in their rooms when a messenger came and announced, "The princess wishes to meet the young man who has brought the flowers for her."

Thangal was surprised. He looked at Kabui as if to seek his approval and advice. "You may go, Thangal, but keep in mind what the king told us."

— To continue





CO-EXISTING WITH ANIMALS

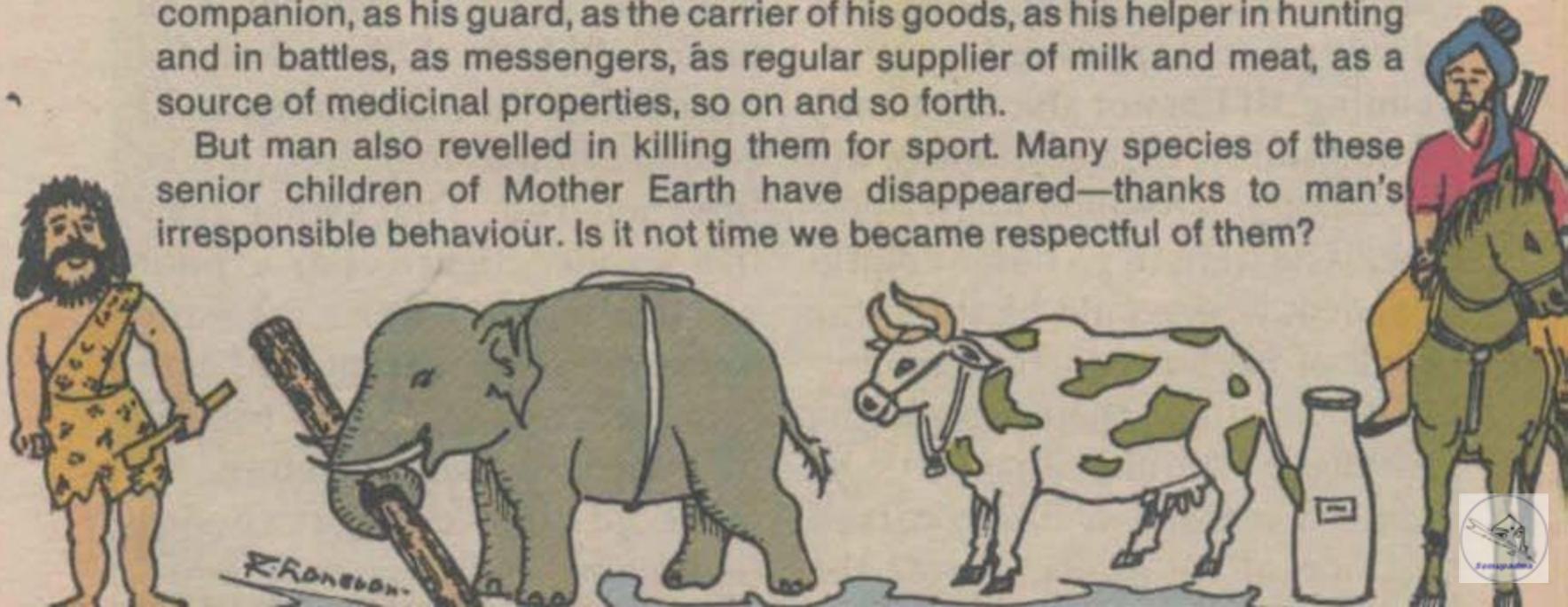
Recently the newspapers carried an interesting item. The man who designed a very special kind of gun, deadly but easy to handle, is a sad person. That is because he sees how his gun is being used by terrorists in killing innocent people.

It is good that the inventor feels sad about his gun. But the second part of the news was very disappointing. It informed us that the same man is now busy inventing a new kind of hunting gun that would make hunting easy. While the inventor feels that using his gun for killing innocent people is bad, he does not see anything wrong in more and more animals being killed.

What he is doing is terribly wrong. Nothing should be done to make hunting easy, any more. Animals and birds were the dwellers on this earth before the birth of man. They were seen as 'vehicles' and servants of gods and goddesses before they were tamed by man. The primitive man learnt much of his art of living from the animal. He even learnt how to know about the approach of rain and other natural events from the behaviour of animals and birds.

He used the animal for his food, used their skin as his dress, and gradually learnt to domesticate some of them. He then used them as his vehicle, as his companion, as his guard, as the carrier of his goods, as his helper in hunting and in battles, as messengers, as regular supplier of milk and meat, as a source of medicinal properties, so on and so forth.

But man also revelled in killing them for sport. Many species of these senior children of Mother Earth have disappeared—thanks to man's irresponsible behaviour. Is it not time we became respectful of them?





No Pity No Pardon

Dasappa was a poor woodcutter, who found it difficult to make both ends meet. He could not brook the sight of his family suffering from acute poverty. He wondered whether there would not come a better day for him, whether he and his family would not enjoy prosperity. He spent anxious days.

One day, he had just reached the forest when it began to rain heavily. He took shelter in an ancient temple, now in ruins. The downpour appeared never-ending. 'If I'm not able to cut any wood today, then my family will go hungry!' Dasappa was desperate. If he were to go home empty-handed, how would he stand the sight of his hungry children?

As he stood there wondering what he should do next, he noticed a wooden figure carved on one of the walls. It was the

figure of Mother Kali. He went near and touched it.. It was not wet. Suddenly, he had an idea. 'It may be an idol of Kali. So what? I can sell it as firewood and get some money and with that I'll be able to buy food for my family'. He picked up his axe and aimed it at the wooden figure.

"Stop! Are you going to cut me up!" the figure seemed to shout at him. "Do you know who I am?

Dasappa was certain that it was the voice of Mother Kali herself. "Mother!" he asked for her pardon. "It was raining, and I couldn't find a single tree to take firewood from. That's when I saw the wooden figure. I'm a poor woodcutter. If I don't take any firewood to the market, and earn some money, my family will die of hunger. I had, therefore, no other go than cut the wooden figure which I find is quite dry."



Mother Kali took pity on him. "I quite realise your predicament. Anyone remaining hungry will soon forget god. No, I'm not angry with you at all. And I shall tell you how you can be without any want. You go home right now, get hold of a new pot, and keep it on the fireplace. It need not be lit. You'll soon find the pot full of food that your family requires. You don't have to worry about food henceforth." She blessed him and the voice faded away.

Dasappa threw away his axe and prostrated before the wooden idol. Unmindful of the rain, he hurried back home. His

wife was horrified to see him without the axe; how would he cut wood the next day, and the next? she wondered. "What happened? Where's your axe?" she asked him.

"Don't worry; from today we'll have enough and more of food. Our misery has ended. I received the blessing of Mother Kali," Dasappa replied briefly, and then went on to tell her all that had happened in the forest that day.

His wife ran to the kitchen and came back with a new, unused pot. She and her husband sat in front of the pot and began chanting the name of Mother Kali. Then they placed it on the





Veerappa. He was not wealthy but had enough to eke out a living. His wife, Rangamma, was always jealous of her neighbours. How come Dasappa was no longer going out to cut wood and yet he and his family had enough food to go round and even to spare? She wondered from where and how they were getting their food. She was eager to get at the truth.

One day, Rangamma saw Dasappa's youngest son outside, alone. "I don't see your father going out to cut wood. Then, how do you manage your food?" she asked him casually.

"My mother doesn't have to cook these days," the boy answered. "She keeps an empty pot on the fireplace and chants the name of Mother Kali. Soon, the pot will be full. My father was blessed by Mother Kali in the forest."

Rangamma's jealousy for Dasappa's wife now only doubled. She did not attend to her chores that day, and went and sat in a corner, waiting for her husband to come back home. When Veerappa returned, he found his wife sitting huddled in

fireplace. There was no fire, no embers even, but it was still warm. The two continued the chanting when they noticed the lid rising as if there was steam inside. They found that the pot was filled to the brim with the food they all needed. In fact, they had not tasted such delicious food till then. That night they did not have to go to sleep on an empty stomach. From that day, there was no scarcity of food; in fact, they had enough even to share with the poor people who came that way.

Dasappa had a neighbour,



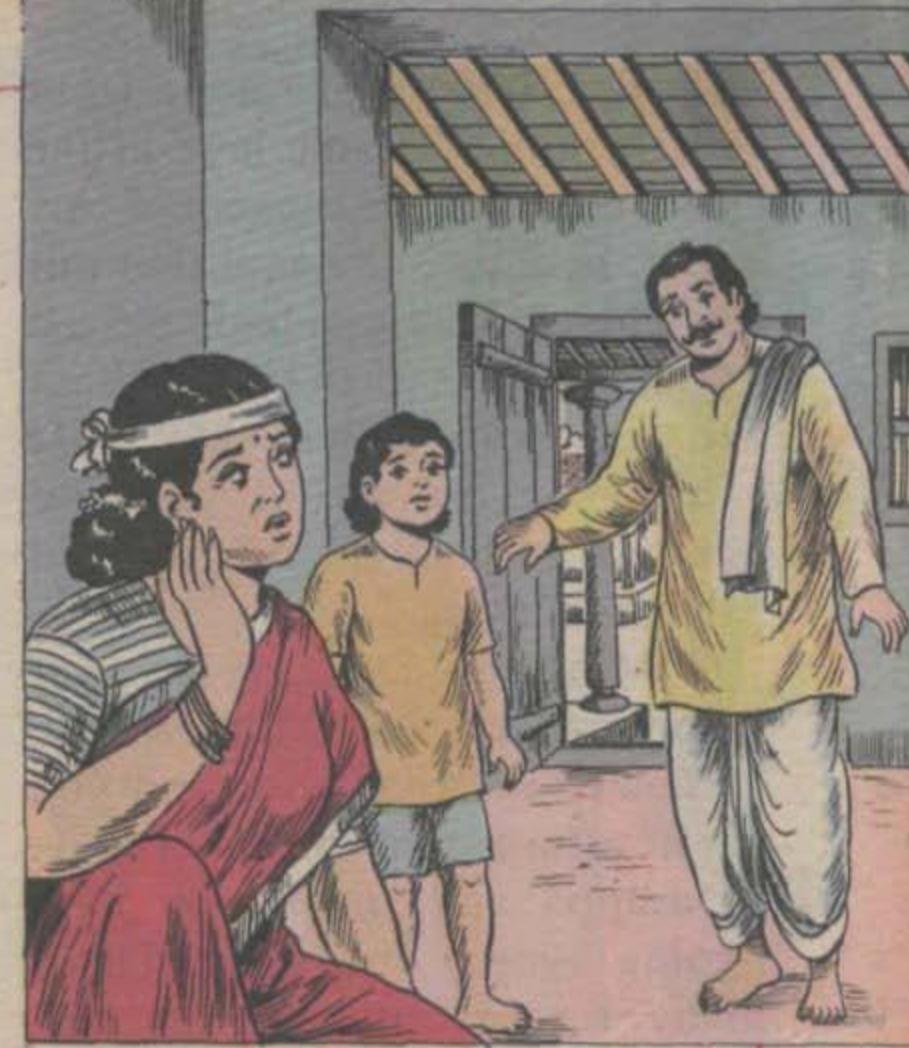
a corner, grumbling. "What happened?" he queried, rather angrily.

"Some people can cook food even on a cold fireplace!" she made an oblique remark.

"What are you saying? I don't understand a thing. Make yourself clear," said Veerappa, stamping his foot.

"Dasappa seems to have received the blessings of the goddess. You're not of any lesser stuff, are you?" Rangamma mumbled, and added loudly, "Why can't you go to the forest and axe the wooden idol there? Mother Kali would take pity on you and shower her blessings. We'll also get our food daily, without having to take the trouble of cooking it."

Veerappa was afraid of his wife. If he did not do as she wanted, he knew he would not get even a morsel of food from her hands. So, the next morning he went to the forest taking an axe with him. He searched for the dilapidated temple and went in. He aimed the axe at the wooden figure. The next moment, the place shook violently. Strong winds blew from one side to the



other. Suddenly, the wooden figure of Mother Kali emitted a lightning which blinded Veerappa. He felt as if someone had struck him with something very heavy.

"You devil!" A voice was heard from the side of the idol. Do you know who I am? I'm none other than the one who protects all living beings in this universe. Yet, you were trying to destroy me, weren't you?"

Veerappa suddenly felt as if his body had innumerable wounds from which blood oozed. "O Mother! Please forgive me!" he

pleaded, lying prostrate in front of the idol. "I came here at the instance and insistence of my wife, because she heard that our neighbour Dasappa had received your blessings when he was about to axe you down. My wife thought you would be kind enough to bless me if I, too, did the same thing."

"Mind you, Dasappa is a poor woodcutter," said Mother Kali. "You're not that poor and you can afford two meals a day. Dasappa and his family were going hungry every day. That's why I took pity on him and forgave him for his act. But you don't deserve either my pity or my pardon!"

"Mother! Please forgive me, too!" Veerappa begged of the goddess.

"All right, I shall forgive you!" said Mother Kali. "But on one

condition. I had forgotten to tell Dasappa that he should pour a teaspoon of ghee into the pot. You must agree to give him a spoon of ghee every day. If you agree to this, then you'll get back your eyesight. Do you agree?"

Veerappa nodded his head and in a trice his eyesight was restored to him. He went back home and gave a graphic account of his experience to his wife. "All this happened because I submitted to your whims, and encouraged your jealousy for others," he protested. "It's a punishment for both of us. Anyway, you must give a big spoonful of ghee to Dasappa's wife every day. That's a promise I gave to Mother Kali."

Rangamma had no choice except to part with some ghee for her neighbour. She did not stop with a spoon, but took a small pot of ghee to her neighbour every day.





BIRDS AND ANIMALS OF INDIA

King-Crow is no crow!

There are very few birds in India which are completely black. The common crow is one; the Black Drongo is another. It is often called King-Crow, though it does not belong to the crow (*Corvidae*) family. Perhaps it is the colour that gives it this relationship with the crow! The Drongo (*Dicruridae*) has some very distinct features—like the long forked tail. The bird is commonly seen in the open countryside and around fields, perched on telegraph wires and fence posts. It swoops down to pounce on some unwary grasshoppers or other insects on the ground.

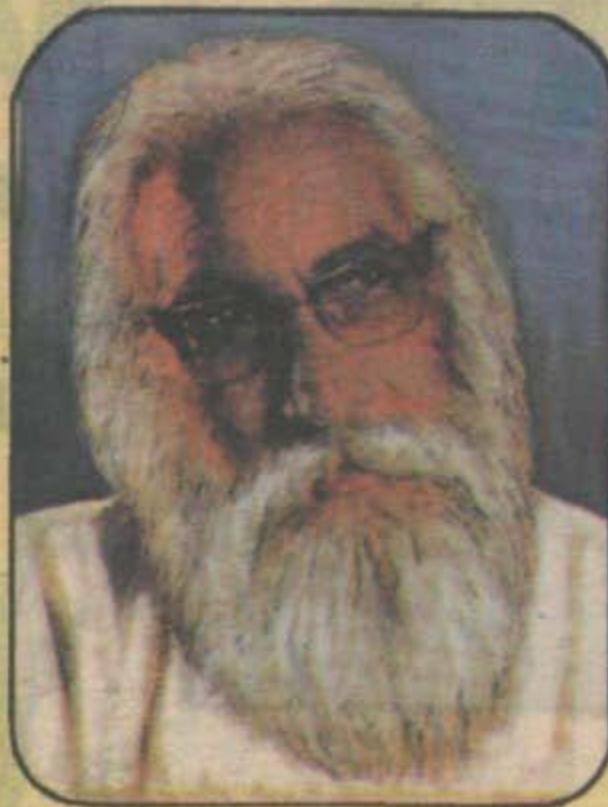
The Drongo is a bold creature and often fights with bigger birds—like the crow. It will never allow another bird to go anywhere near its nest. It even takes care of the nests of other birds near its own nest. This habit has given it another epithet, 'watchman', or *kotwal* in Hindi.

Eight kinds of Drongos are found in India. The Racket-tailed Drongo has a tuft on its forehead and a pair of wire-like streamers at the end of each fork of the tail, attached to which is a small feather-like tip. The bird is called Bhimraj in north India. The White-bellied Drongo has a white belly, while Ashy is slaty-black with ruby-red eyes.



ARTISTS OF MODERN INDIA

SHOBHA SINGH



"Hello boy, you'll be an army man like your father, won't you be?" a visitor asked a little boy in a Punjab Cantonment.

The boy looked up, smiled, but nodded negatively. Then he pointed at the floor on which he had drawn some figures. He meant that he would like to become an artist.

The visitor laughed. "Who will feed you if you go on drawing and do nothing else?" he demanded to know.

The boy pointed to a room inside where sat his elder sister, busy with some household chores.

Indeed, the boy, named Shobha, had great trust in his

elder sister, Bibi Lakshmi Devi. He had lost his mother when he was only five years old. His father, a surveyor in the army, had little time to look after him. It was Bibi Lakshmi Devi and her husband, Sardar Mangal Singh, who took over the responsibility of bringing up the boy.

Shobha, born in 1901 at Hargobindpur in Punjab, lost his father too while in his teens. He had little formal education—only up to Class V. He got some training for joining the army as a junior draughtsman. He was soon sent to Iraq with an army team. That gave him the chance to learn English with the help of some senior colleagues. At the same time, he came across a few books with pictures of famous Western painters. His childhood love for art now grew stronger.

Back in India, in 1923, he married and decided to earn his living as a painter. He resigned his job in the army and set up his studio in Lahore. Two themes inspired him most: the great Sikh gurus



who, even at the threat of impending torture and death, kept their heads high and, secondly, the moving popular Punjabi tales of love and adventure.

Later, he moved to Delhi and, in 1942, to Preet Nagar, an ideal village set up between Lahore and Amritsar by Gurubux Singh, editor of *Preet Lari*, a Punjabi journal. But after a while, his restless spirit led him once again to Lahore.

In 1947 came the great tragedy of the division of



the country. Shobha Singh left Lahore, leaving behind whatever he had, including his remarkable paintings. He then settled down in Kangra Valley in Himachal Pradesh. Of undaunted spirit, he began a new phase of his career as an artist. By then he had already made a name for himself.

Shobha Singh died on August 21, 1986. He remains an inspiring example of a self-made artist, for he had no formal training in art. Among his famous paintings are several portraits of Guru Nanak, the other Gurus, Lord Krishna, and Lord Rama.

DO YOU KNOW?

1. Which is the largest living bird today?
2. When did the Indian Constitution come into force?
3. There are five international languages. Which are they?
4. Among the following, who is the real administrator of India? President, Vice-President, Prime Minister, Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, Speaker of the Lok Sabha.
5. Which is the largest ocean in the world? And the second largest? What is the comparison in size?
6. What is the difference between "Vande Mataram" and "Jana Gana Mana"?
7. Who received the first Nobel Prize for Literature?
8. The maximum number of periodicals in India appear in one language. Which?
9. Which country is known as the 'land of the midnight sun'?
10. Which is the most ancient musical instrument of India?
11. How frequently do the Olympic Games take place?
12. Who founded the Slave Dynasty of India? Whose slave was he?
13. Which is the world's widest waterfall?
14. Who produced India's first feature film? When? Name?
15. What is the former name of Thailand?
16. When did the Buddha die?
17. Which is the largest airport in the world?

Answers:

1. Ostroch
2. On January 26, 1950
3. English, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian
4. The Prime Minister
5. Pacific and Atlantic respectively. The Pacific is more than two times larger than the Atlantic.
6. The first is our National Song, the other our National Anthem.
7. R.F.A. Sully-Prudhomme
8. Hindi. More than 3,000 in number.
9. Norway
10. The Vcenna
11. Once in four years
12. Qutb-ud-din. He was the slave of Ghori
13. The Khone waterfall in Laos—10,800 metres wide.
14. Dadashed Phalke. In 1913. *Rajah Harischandra*.
15. Siam
16. 488 B.C.
17. King Khalid International Airport, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.



STRANGERS IN THE FOREST

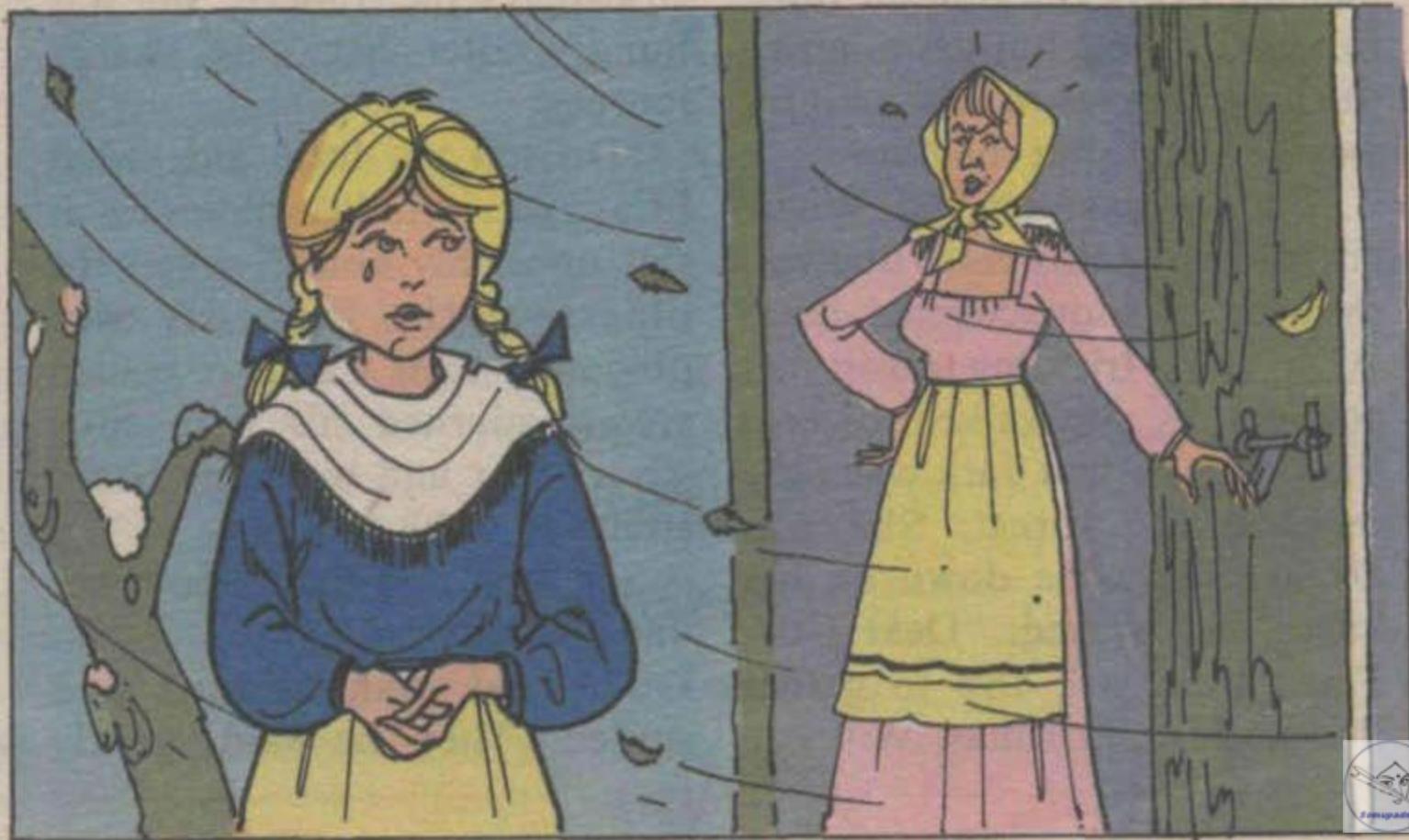
Long ago, there was a small hamlet at the foot of the blue mountains. In the hamlet lived a little girl called Ninoska. She had a stepmother who did not love her but made her do all the hard household chores. She gave her very little food and always sought an opportunity to drive her out of the house. Day by day her hatred grew more bitter, as her stepdaughter gradually became more beautiful.

It was the Christmas eve. The envious woman thought out a

wicked scheme. "You good-for-nothing girl!" she said, calling Ninoska. "Tomorrow we're hosting a feast. I want you to fetch me seven bunches of flowers from the woods. Mind you, each bunch must bear one of the distinct colours of the rainbow. The seven bunches should show the seven colours."

"But, Mother! It is icy and cold, and flowers don't bloom in this season!" the girl protested meekly.

"What? How dare you defy my





orders? Out you go into the forest and stay there with the wolves and the bears till you get those flowers," she shouted angrily, pushing her into the wintry weather, and shut the door.

Ninoska was very sad. Where could she find flowers in that vast expanse of snow-covered land? With tears trickling down her cold cheeks, she walked towards the woods. It was dark when she reached the forest. She was afraid. She came down on her knees and prayed: "Dear God, I'm a little girl. I've to gather flowers for Christmas. Will you

please help me? I know you're present everywhere and can hear my wee little voice."

Suddenly Ninoska saw a light flickering in the darkness. Fear left her and she followed it. No longer was she afraid. It led her to a small clearing deep in the forest. There, around a dancing fire, sat four men. "May I sit awhile by your fire and get warm?" she asked courteously, shivering with cold.

"Welcome, sweet little damsel, join us in our eve-of-the-Christmas feast," they said in a sing-song manner.

Ninoska ate with relish the delicious cakes, honey and the strawberry pie. Indeed, she was hungry after her long, weary journey.

"Do tell us, little girl, what brings you into this wilderness at this unearthly hour?" asked the oldest of the four. He was obviously their Chief. A golden crown adorned his long silky silvery hair and his white beard stretched to his toes.

She then told them about her unusual mission.

The old man nodded and smiled. Then he said, gently



caressing her head, "I'm King Winter and the other three are my brothers. Don't worry, my little one, all will be well with you." He then turned to the man sitting next to him. He was young and beautiful, and a smile played on his face. "Come, Brother Spring, take my place."

The moment Spring changed places with Winter, Ninoska began to feel warmer. A fresh dawn seemed to have set in. Green tender leaves appeared on the trees and birds began to sing in joy. A host of flowers of varied colours and fragrance also blossomed all over the place.

"Gather your flowers quickly, little angel," said Spring, humming a happy tune and performing a pirouette.

It was not difficult for Ninoska to collect seven bunches of flowers of the colours of the rainbow.

"Thank you for your kind help. Merry Christmas!" she said and gratefully offered each of them a wee little flower as sweet as herself.

"Merry Christmas, dear child. Let God bless you," they said and kissed her little hand. Then King



Winter asked his golden deer to leave for her home by their silver sledge.

Meanwhile, Winter changed places with Spring and the world turned cold and bare once again. Ninoska reached home in no time. For so fast did the deer pull the sledge that it practically flew over the snowy carpet.

Her stepmother was surprised to see her back so soon and with the flowers, too! "Where did you get them from?" she asked.

"From the woods," replied Ninoska innocently and told her no further.





The wicked woman could not sleep until she had hatched another plan. The next day, in the evening, she asked Ninoska to fetch her some good ripe apples. "Remember," she warned, "don't return without them."

"This time the girl is sure to fail and the wild animals will eat her up in the forest," she chuckled to herself.

Ninoska once again sadly wended her way into the woods. It was already dark by the time she reached the magical spot. There, as before, sat the four

seasons around the dancing fire.

"Wasn't your mother happy with the flowers?" they asked her, inviting her to join them at their dinner.

"She wants some good ripe apples now," said Ninoska, "and has asked me not to return without them."

The king turned to one of his brothers with blue eyes and a bright glowing face. "Come, Brother Summer, take my place."

So Summer got up and changed places with Winter. At once it felt warm. The trees were laden with golden fruit and little animals skipped hither and thither. Ninoska went to the trees and the branches lowered themselves so that she could easily pluck the apples. Then King Winter took his original seat and all was cold and bare again.

The golden deer carried her back home and she knocked on the door. "Mother," she called, "I'm back with the apples."

The woman could not believe her eyes. 'Flowers and apples in these cold winter days? I'll go to the woods and gather flowers and fruit myself. I, too, can find them



if this little girl can!' she told herself.

So, the following day she made her way into the forest carrying with her a large basket. She looked for flowers and apples everywhere, but found none. By and by she came to the place where the four beings sat by the fire.

"Good lady, what're you looking for? Have you lost your way?" they asked.

"Mind your own business, you thieves hiding in the forest!" she shouted rudely and was about to go her way when King Winter touched her with his staff.

Lo and behold! She at once turned into a statue of snow! She thus remained there standing, cold, as cold as her heart. Her husband and Ninoska passed by her several times, looking for her, but they could not see her. Only

with the onset of the warmer months, when the snow melted, did she assume her living form.

She plodded homeward. On seeing her from some distance, Ninoska ran to her and hugged her. Surprisingly, her stepmother was warm, gentle, and kind towards her. She never rebuked her again and began to love her.

Ninoska never saw the four brothers in the woods even though she visited the spot several times. But when the seasons changed, Ninoska looked out of her window and fondly remembered them in gratitude and mumbled to herself, 'They must be roaming from forest to forest and must be camping somewhere else now. They wouldn't remember me. But can I ever forget them?"

—Retold by Anup Kishore Das



WORLD OF NATURE

Snakes are slow-moving

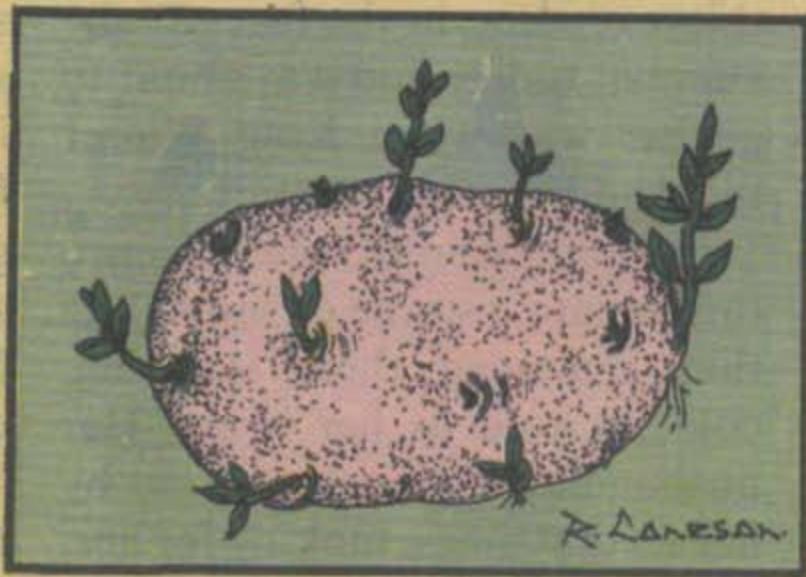
That snakes can move fast is more a myth than a fact. In reality, they move rather slowly, though at times they can attain some speed—especially when they race to catch a prey.

Among land snakes, the black mamba can reach a speed of something like 10 km per hour, and that is the fastest for snakes.



Vegetable reproduces itself

Did you know that the potato can reproduce itself? If an old potato is left for a long time, especially in a vegetable rack in the shop, you will find little shoots growing from the tiny holes and bumps on it. They are called "eyes" which are actually the buds of young shoots. The vegetable contains enough food reserves with which the shoots thrive.



A 'fox' that flies

Bats are invariably small; their heads look like those of mice.

But there is one kind of bat whose head resembles that of the fox. Hence the name 'flying fox'. These bats are as big as dogs and have a wing span of up to 6ft. Unlike ordinary bats, which rely on sound to find their way, the flying fox depends on its sight. Flying foxes are common in India.





New Tales of King Vikram and
the Vampire

DIVINITY IN ART

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time; gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King! You seem to be making untiring efforts and without respite as if you wish to achieve something. I pity you. Instead of enjoying comfortable sleep on a cozy bed, you're still coming after me. Perhaps you're after a name and fame, or power and wealth. Man should not become sentimental



while trying to achieve whatever he desires. Do you know what happened to Baidyanath? He was a great scholar. You won't feel tired if you were to listen to his story."

The vampire then narrated the story of Baidyanath. Once there was a king called Manavendra. As was the old custom, his court consisted of some artistes also. Somehow none of them could impress the king. Though they were expected to perform before the king every day, he would often leave the court half-way through their recital or would not

even care to ask them to perform. He was disgusted with them and wished that he could send them away without keeping them in the court at great expense. He consulted his ministers.

One of the ministers thought of a plan. He called the court musician and told him that the king wished a song be sung that would bring rain. The musician agreed, but there was no rain. That was pretext enough to pack him off from the court.

Next, the minister called for the royal painter and sculptor and asked them to paint a portrait of god and sculpt His figure. Now, they knew they had never seen god. How then could they capture His figure in a painting or a sculpture? However, they had to fulfil the king's wish. When they completed their work, the king asked each one of them, "How are you certain that your painting is that of god? Your sculpture is the figure of god?" They could not give him any satisfactory reply. Small wonder, then, they were dismissed from the *durbar*.

The minister then sent for the court dancers. He narrated a



story and asked them to depict it in dance. Manavendra watched their performance, shook his head, and said he could not understand a thing. The performers were asked to leave the court.

Then the turn came for the royal poets and *pundits*. "Our prince has learnt the use of arms, but he is lacking in general wisdom and commonsense," the minister told them. "The king wishes, you take charge of him and give him all the training that he will require and make him wiser and more knowledgeable than you all."

The *pundits* gave different tests to the prince. He merely told them arrogantly that he was a prince and need not know anything other than warfare. He was not willing to be trained by them. When they went and reported the matter to the king, he told them to their face that *they* were no good. That was the end of their tenure in the court.

Around that time, a much learned scholar, named Baidyanath, had arrived in the kingdom of Gaganendra, next to that of Manavendra. He was out to earn



for himself a name and fame, but the *pundits* of Gaganendra's court insulted him. However, he did not give up. "O King! All these wise men of your court," he told the king, "have very little knowledge. They're only posing as scholars. You must first give them some education. And only I can impart that kind of education to them. So, you may appoint me in your court."

Gaganendra laughed aloud. "You really mean to say that my courtiers are no *pundits*? That they have very little knowledge? But, then, what proof is there

that you are more learned than they? I heard that my neighbour Manavendra has dismissed all the *pundits* in *his* court. Perhaps if you go to him and are able to convince him of your knowledge and wisdom, then probably I may take you to teach the *pundits* of my court."

Baidyanath liked the proposition. He went to King Manavendra and explained the purpose of his visit—to convince the king of his erudition. "To be very frank, Baidyanath," Manavendra confessed, "I don't have any special regard for *pundits*, poets, artists and artistes. I would advise you to exhibit your knowledge and wisdom to some other king!"

"O King! I'm not only a *pundit* and a poet, but well-versed in all arts. Being an all-rounder, several kings were after me, but I didn't care much for their offers. I wish to be a member of your court only."

"If you have rejected the offers from all those kings," queried Manavendra, "and only wished to come to me, does that mean that *I* have something special which none others has?"

Baidyanath knew that he had

touched Manavendra at one of his weak spots. He decided to take advantage of it. "O King! You're different from everybody else! I would call you a king of kings! That's why you've so much contempt for all those who parade as *pundits*!"

King Manavendra was thrilled when he listened to such flattery from Baidyanath. "To be honest, Baidyanath, I hadn't realised that till now. I didn't know my own greatness."

Baidyanath continued his flattery of the king. "As if you should be aware of that! Under your rule, your kingdom is enjoying peace and prosperity. Rains come on time; the crops are good; there is all round progress. Why should it rain at all if a musician were to sing a song to evoke rains? In fact, they fear your wrath if their singing causes floods and the crops are destroyed. It's all due to your greatness!"

"Is that so?" asked Manavendra, hesitating to believe all that Baidyanath told him. "If that be the case with musicians and artistes, what happened to my painters and sculptors? Why did



they disobey my orders to paint the portrait of god or sculpt His figure?"

"O King! I hope you remember that the Lord took the incarnation of Sree Rama *after* Parasurama, whose greatness then faded. What happened here is something similar. You're a divine being yourself. That's why painters and sculptors are incapable of painting or sculpting the figure of the Lord."

Manavendra could not believe his ears. "You mean to say that I'm an incarnation of god? How do you say that?"

"Sree Rama did not employ any magic, nor did the Buddha do any wonders. Still people consider them as incarnations of god. Why? All because of their good deeds. It's in one's good deeds that others find divinity. There's yet another truth. Only sincere devotees can have the vision of the Lord. Right from childhood, I'm having faith in god. I see god in you, O King! Besides that I don't have any other proof. In fact, the painters and sculptors in your court tried their best to copy the figure of god; they succeeded but only to



some extent. I don't think I'm capable of even that much!"

"Then why did they fail to see god in me?" was the king's next question.

"When you mentioned god to them, they had your image in their mind. But just as it is impossible to capture its radiance in a painting of the sun, they could only capture the human figure in you. They could not imagine anything beyond that."

Manavendra thought he could now appreciate the worth of painters and sculptors better. He still had doubts about the players



ever, the minister laughed aloud. "It's all nonsense!" he commented.

"I'm not surprised!" remarked Baidyanath, staring at the minister. "It was all divine dispensation, that's why you couldn't understand a thing!"

The king bowed to Baidyanath, "I never realised you're so wise, Baidyanath. You've helped me know my own worth. Now you must take the responsibility of training my son and imparting all the knowledge that he will require in life. I shall be ever grateful to you."

"That's my fortune, O King!" responded Baidyanath. "I shall mould the prince into an expert in just one day's time!"

"In just one day?" the king could not hold back his surprise.

Baidyanath asked the king to send for the prince. When the boy came, he called him aside and said: "O Prince! Your father is a divine person. Take him for god, or His incarnation. You must grow up like him. And for that, there are only two ways. One, two days in the week, you must observe fast, hang upside down from the branch of a tree, and

and dancers who could not depict a story through their acts. Baidyanath had an explanation for that, too. "They usually depict themes which have some association with divinity. You never gave them a story to enact. Someone else narrated a story and you asked them to enact that for you. Would you like to try telling them a story yourself?"

The king asked his minister to call the dancers and other artistes. He then narrated a story and asked them to enact it. When they did so, he could understand their act and appreciate it. How-



meditate. You've to continue this exercise for ten long years. You may find it rather difficult. Well, there is a simpler way as well. You put out your tongue and I shall write on it a *mantra*. You'll soon become an educated person. You may choose either of the ways."

The prince had no hesitation in choosing the second method. "Good!" said Baidyanath. "But for this, you've to observe certain rules, and code of conduct. Before I write the *mantra* on your tongue, you should discard your arrogance and anger. You must have peace of mind. You must respect your elders and seniors, and pay your obeisance to them. You must be kind and affectionate to all those who are younger to you. You may know very many things, but you must respect the opinion of others. You must have a smiling face when you talk to others. If you behave as I advise you, only then will my *mantra* have any effect. Otherwise, it may even rebound on you!"

"I shall do just as you say, O *pundit*!" acquiesced the prince. "Please write the *mantra*,



without waiting for another moment!"

Baidyanath then wrote the *mantra* on the prince's tongue. After the boy had left for his apartments, the *pundit* went to Manavendra. "O King! The prince has been quick in grasping things."

"Is that so?" asked the king in wonderment. "But what's the proof?"

"An educated person can easily be distinguished by his looks and words," replied Baidyanath. "You may watch your son from today onwards."



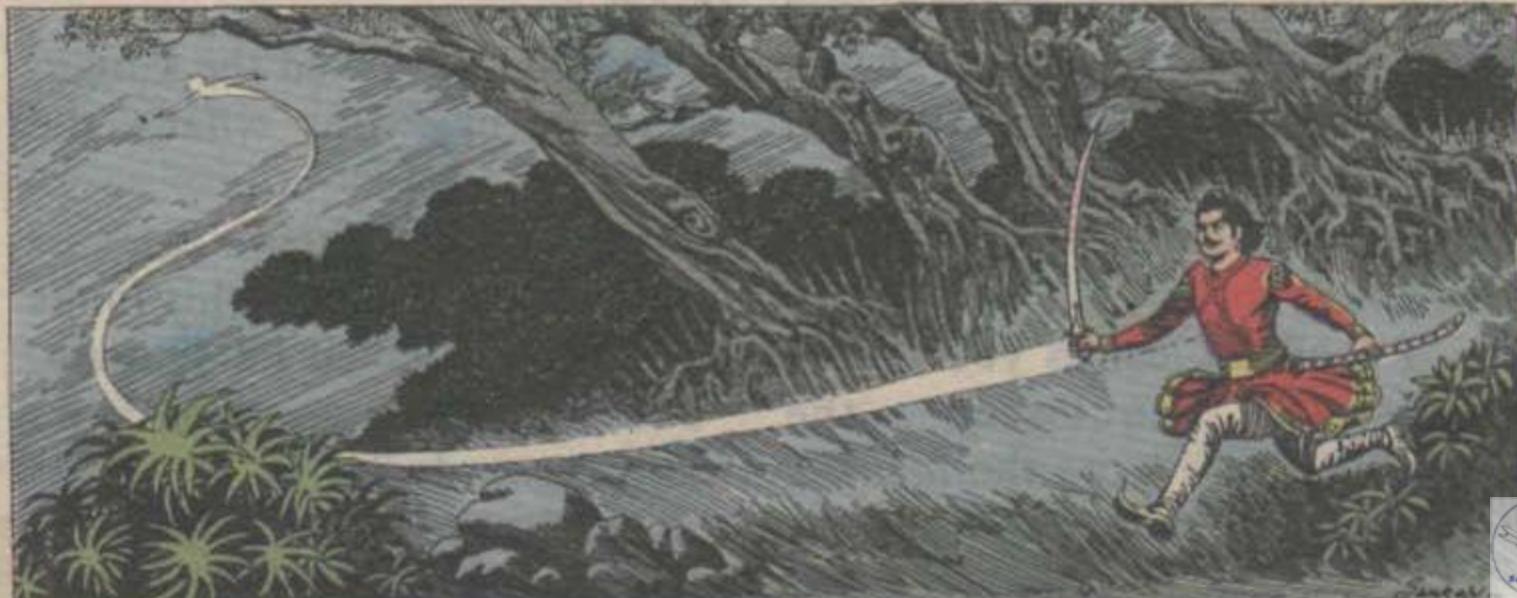
The king observed the prince for the next seven days. He could notice improvement and more improvement in him day by day. Manavendra was very much pleased. He invited Baidyanath to be his court *pundit*. However, he told the king that he would like to spread word about Manavendra's greatness and took leave of the king, who showered him with gifts of money and in kind. Baidyanath went back to King Gaganendra and told him all that had happened. He joined his *durbar* as court *pundit*.

The vampire concluded the story there and turned to King Vikramaditya. "O King! Baidyanath proved his scholarship and erudition to King Manavendra, but did not accept *his* invitation. Instead, he accepted the earlier offer of King Gaganendra. Why? If you know the answer, but prefer to keep silent, beware, your

head will be blown to pieces!"

"Baidyanath easily realised that Manavendra had little or no knowledge of worldly affairs," replied Vikramaditya. "He, therefore, first paved the way for the king to give due respect to the *pundits* and poets, artistes and dancers, and painters and sculptors in his kingdom. It was, however, not his intention to reform Manavendra, though he achieved this by reforming his son. But how long would the father and son remember his advice? He had a lurking doubt. That's why he decided not to remain with King Manavendra and instead accepted Gaganendra's offer."

The vampire knew that the king had once again outwitted him. He flew back to the ancient tree, carrying the corpse with him. Vikramaditya drew his sword and went after the vampire.





LET US KNOW

What is the exact meaning of 'bureaucracy'?

—D. Sudheer, Nellore

The dictionary meaning is 'governance by bureaucrats, or a body of officials'. It also means 'a system of government by officials'. Bureaucracy in India is a legacy we got from the British rulers, which we adapted to suit the democratic set-up we have in the States as well as the Centre. In each case, there is a cabinet of ministers holding different portfolios—like Finance, Defence, Health, Education, Industry, Transport, etc. And to help these ministers, there are departments or ministries manned by bureaucrats. In a State, they will include the Chief Secretary, Secretaries of various departments, Joint Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries, and others. They form what is known as the Secretariat. Administration by these is generally known as Bureaucracy.

Which is the biggest book in the world? How many pages has it?

—Padma Charan Jena, Puri

Try to imagine a book 9 ft. wide and 10 ft. 2 inches long, with 300 pages, and weighing nearly 253 kg. (560 lb.). It was printed and published in the U.S.A. in 1976. What other title would you have given it other than "**The Super Book**"? Incidentally, the smallest book ever printed was the popular children's story, *Old King Cole!* published in 1985 in Scotland. Its size: 1 mm by 1 mm. You'll need a needle—that is, if ever you come across a copy (only 85 copies were printed!)—to turn its pages.

• Readers are welcome to send such queries on culture, literature or general knowledge which should be of interest to others too, for brief answers from the *Chandamama*.



SPORTS SNIPPETS



Record erased in 24 hours

Two world records by the same athlete in the same event, within 24 hours! The athlete is the Chinese distance runner Wang Junxia who, on Sept. 13, sliced 6 seconds off (8 min. 6.11 sec.) her world mark in women's 3,000 metres (8:12.20) set the previous day during the Seventh National Athletic Games in Beijing. It was her third world record in six days. On Sept. 8, she had won the women's 10,000-metre run in 29 min. 31.78 seconds, slashing 42 seconds off the 1986 record (30: 13.74) set by Ingrid Kristiansen of Norway. The 3,000 metres record had stood in the name of Tatiana Kazankina, of the Soviet Union (8:22.62) made in 1984.

When reporters evinced surprise over 20-year-old Wang's striking performance, her coach, Mr. Ma Junren, said he believed it was the turtle stew that he gave to the Chinese athletes that made all the difference. True, another world record had come from Qu Yunxia on Sept. 11 when she clocked 3 min. 50.45 seconds in women's 1,500 metres. The world record till then (3:52.47) had also stood in the name of Tatiana, made in 1980.



Records by Morceli and Mo - Park

Early September saw two men breaking world records. On Sept. 5, Noureddine Morceli of Algeria set a new record for 1 mile, clocking 3 min. 44.39 seconds, at an invitational track and field meet in Rieti, Central Italy. He beat the record (3:46.32) made by Steve Cram, of Britain, in Oslo in 1985.

The other record came from Jung Mo-Park,



of South Korea, when he won the world archery championship with 119 points, at Antalya, in Turkey on Sept. 11. The world record till then was held by Sergi Zabrodskiy of Ukraine, who came only a third, behind Kim Jung-Ho (113 points), also of South Korea.

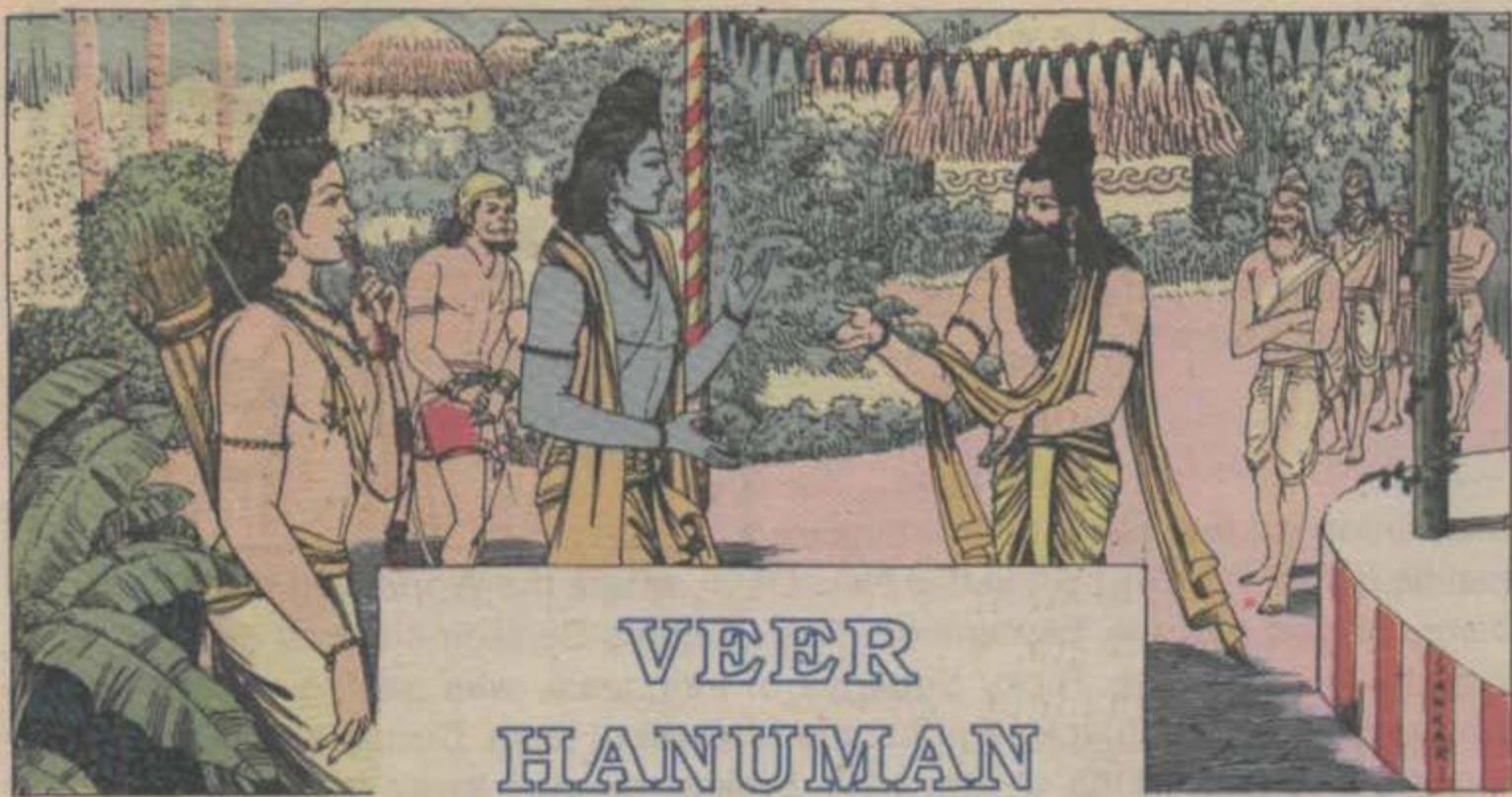


Too fast for the Umpire!

Badminton is a fast game, but the players can be faster! This was proved in New Delhi, where the World Cup was being played early in September. The Doubles Semi-finals was on. World's Number One, Ricky Subagya of Indonesia, was pairing with compatriot Rexy Maniacky against the Malaysian team. During a rally, Ricky had enough time to throw his broken racquet away and pick another from his bag. All in a flash! The umpire from Thailand thought, Ricky had broken a rule, by not taking his permission to leave the court for a spare racquet! But how could he seek permission *during a rally?* protested Ricky. The matter went to the chief referee, who opined that the Indonesian pair was even otherwise winning comfortably. The Thai gentleman accepted his mistake, but said he had not come across such an incident in his career. The 'point' was then replayed—much to the delight of the spectators. Later, the Indonesian pair defeated the Chinese pair in the finals. This was the fifth title of the year for the Indonesian pair, beginning with the Indonesian Open, Malaysian Open, the SEA Games, and then the Swedish Open. At the previous world championships, Ricky was paired by Rudy Gunawan, as Rexy was indisposed.

The Men's Singles final between Alan Budi Kusuma and Joko Suprianto, both of Indonesia, lasted barely 13 minutes, when Alan beat World No.1 Joko. The Women's Singles was a 27- minute affair when Susi Susanti, of Indonesia, beat Lim Xiaoqing of Sweden, taking her on, what was described as, a "guided tour" of the court! It was another major conquest for Susi, who now holds the World, Olympic, All England, and the Grand Prix titles, besides the Danish, German, and the Thai Open titles—all bagged in the course of 16 months!





VEER HANUMAN

(38)

(As directed by Rama, Sita gets ready for the fire test to prove that she is a chaste woman despite her kidnapping by Ravana and stay in his palace for several years. Agni, the god of Fire, appears before Rama and hands back Sita, who is unscathed. Dasaratha, too, appears to him and blesses him. Vibhishana offers them the Pushpak vehicle to take them back to Ayodhya.)

On his way back to Ayodhya, Rama reached the *ashram* of sage Bharadwaj. He prostrated before the *muni*. "Are the people of Ayodhya contended and happy? Has Bharata been ruling well? How're my three mothers?"

"Your brother, Bharata, has been leading the life of an asec-

tic," said Bharadwaj. "He worships your *paduka* (wooden sandals) every day and rules the land as your representative. He has been passing days in expectation of your early return to Ayodhya. Everybody in Ayodhya is well. Your mothers, too, have been eagerly waiting for your return from exile."

THE CORONATION OF RAMA



Rama called Hanuman. "You must immediately go and meet Bharata," he instructed Hanuman. "Before that, you must meet the boatman, Guha, in Sringapura. Tell him that Lakshmana and I will soon be going to him. He'll be immensely glad to hear the news. He'll tell you how to reach Ayodhya, and where you can find Bharata. When you meet him, inform him that I'll be shortly arriving with Sugriva the King of Kishkindha, and the lord of Lanka, Vibhishana. Bharata must be anxiously awaiting my arrival so that he can hand over the kingdom to me. Let him feel happy and comforted at the prospect of my return soon."

Hanuman immediately took off for Ayodhya. On the way, he alighted at Sringapura and met Guha. "Sree Rama sends his greetings to you. He, Lakshmana, and Sitadevi are now in the *ashram* of sage Bharadwaj. They'll resume their journey tomorrow, and you'll be able to meet them soon. I must now go and convey the news to Bharata in Nandigram." Hanuman then started for that place.

Nandigram presented a sight



of scenic beauty, and Hanuman enjoyed every moment that he spent there. Ayodhya was quite close by. Bharata had built for himself a hut in Nandigram and had been staying there for fourteen long years. Why was his brother Rama still not returning to Ayodhya? he wondered, and spent anxious days.

Hanuman reached Bharata's hut and paid his obeisance to him. "I've come to convey the news that Sree Rama is hale and hearty. Right now he is with sage Bharadwaj in his *ashram* and will be starting for Ayodhya tomor-



row. He knows that you're anxiously awaiting his return. That's why he asked me to come here in advance and give you this glad news. He is accompanied by Sitadevi, brother Lakshmana, the monkey king, Sugriva, and the Rakshas³ king, Vibhishana."

"What do I hear?" Bharata could not believe his ears. "You mean to say, my beloved brother Sree Ram^a has returned from Lanka?" He jumped for joy. "What reward shall I give you, O messenger, for bringing me such glad tidings? Don't hesitate, ask whatever you wish for!"

"No, no! I don't need any reward," said Hanuman modestly. "I only crave for your love and affection." He then gave Bharata all the news of Rama's victory over Ravana.

"Did you hear that, Shatrughna?" Bharata turned to his younger brother. "Our brothers Rama and Lakshmana will soon arrive here! Tell all people to put on their best clothes. Let the roads and streets be strewn with flowers and sprinkled with scent. The house fronts should have floral patterns drawn. Our brothers are returning after fourteen years of exile; they should be accorded a warm welcome. Go and make all arrangements."

Shatrughna went about carrying the orders of Bharata. Arrangements to give an affectionate welcome to Rama were almost complete. Drum beats and pipe music heralded the joyous news to the people who thronged the route from Nandigram to Ayodhya. People ran for vantage positions. Some climbed the trees on either side of the route. Some others mounted elephants and horses to get an unhindered sight of the spectacular welcome.

There was no single face without a smile. They all waited for Rama's arrival with bated breath.

Dasaratha's three queens, Kausalya, Kaikeyi, and Sumitra, soon reached Nandigram, along with the ministers. Soldiers took their positions on the route. Bharata carried Rama's sandals on his head with great reverence. The ministers held garlands in their hands. Bharata was getting impatient. He turned to Hanuman who was standing by his side. "What would be delaying Rama?"

"Perhaps their departure from

the ashram was delayed," Hanuman tried to pacify him. "But do I hear the sound of the Pushpak? There! You can see it as a speck in the sky. Pushpak once belonged to Lord Kubera. Then Ravana acquired it. After he was killed, King Vibhishana gave it to Rama for his journey to Ayodhya. They are all there in the Pushpak."

Soon, Pushpak descended and landed in front of them. It was Rama who alighted first and the others followed him. The moment he saw Rama, Bharata rushed to him. He placed the sandals in front of his brother



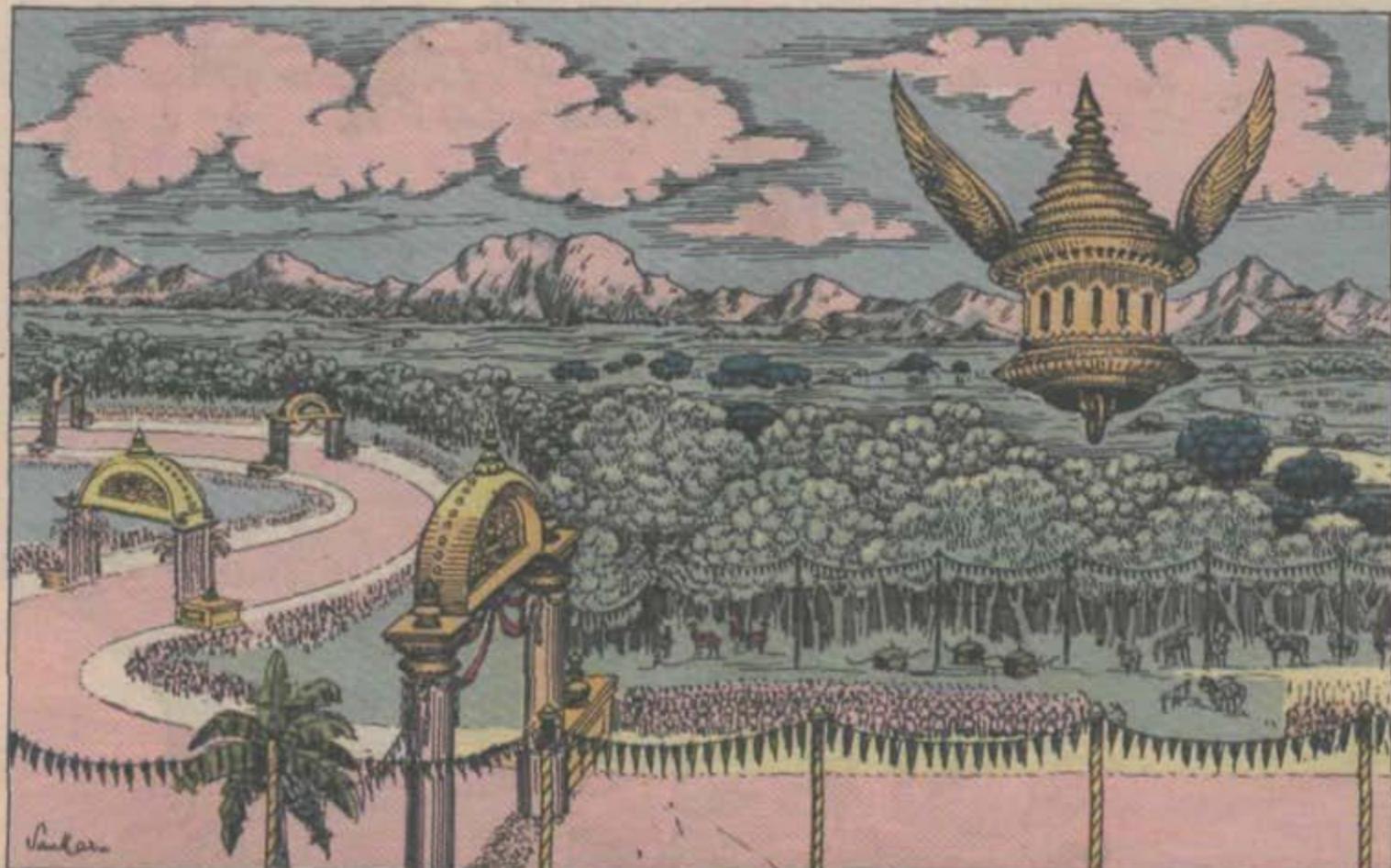
and prostrated before him. He then paid his obeisance to Sita and embraced brother Lakshmana. He also bowed to the two kings, Sugriva and Vibhishana. "You both are now like our brothers," Bharata told them. "We'll never forget the help and assistance you rendered to us."

Rama searched out his mother, Kausalya, in the crowd. He prostrated before her, as well as Kaikeyi and Sumitra. He also prostrated before sage Vasishta.

The people's joy on seeing Rama knew no bounds. They sang songs in praise of him, and danced around him and Sita.

Bharata requested Rama to wear the wooden sandals. "I've worshipped them all through these years. I also took care of the kingdom on your behalf. You must now assume power and the responsibility of ruling Ayodhya. Come, let's all proceed to the capital."

Rama accepted the sandals from Bharata. After wearing them, he moved to where the people were rejoicing. He joined their revelry. By then, the elders, in consultation with sage Vasishta, discussed the formalities for Rama's coronation. An auspicious time was selected.

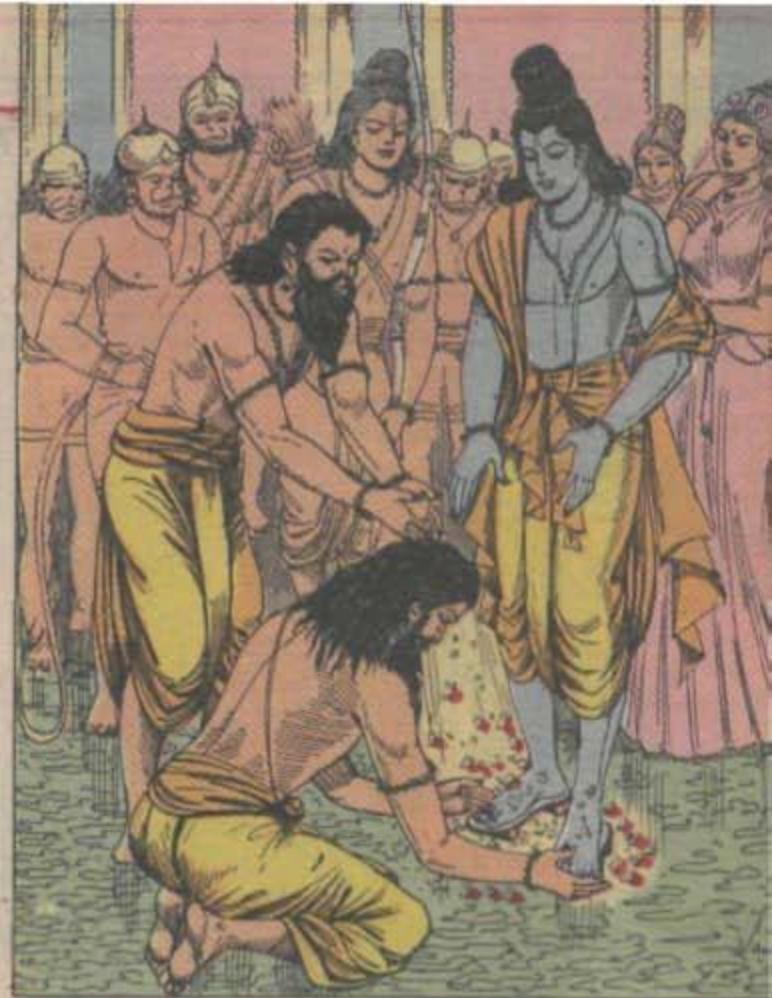


Rama, accompanied by his brothers, went for a royal bath, while their mothers prepared Sita for the grand ceremony.

A chariot, driven by Sumitran, arrived to take Rama to Ayodhya. Rama got on to the chariot along with Hanuman. The first people to proceed to Ayodhya were the three queens of Dasaratha and sage Vasishta. As soon as they reached the palace, they supervised the arrangements for the coronation.

Soon Rama, Lakshmana, and Sita entered the palace. People greeted them with cheers. They also cheered Hanuman, Sugriva, and Vibhishana when they came to know of the help they gave to Rama and Lakshmana to defeat Ravana. People showered flower petals on all of them. At the palace, Rama straight away went to his father Dasaratha's apartments and sat there recalling his days with him. When he came out, he ordered how and where people like Vibhishana and Sugriva should be given all comforts of stay.

Sugriva asked Hanuman, Jambava, Vedadarsi, and Rishabha to bring the four



golden vessels filled with the waters of four oceans. Some more vessels were brought and they contained waters of all the rivers in the vast kingdom. People excitedly watched all this exercises.

Rama and Sita were then seated on a velvet-lined platform. Then a group of sages, brahmins, and prominent people anointed Rama and Sita with the water from the vessels. The chanting of different *mantras* rent the air. Rama and Sita took the blessings of the three royal mothers.





After the anointing ceremony, Rama and Sita put on fresh clothes and took their seat on the golden throne. It was a grand spectacle never before witnessed by anyone present there. Brother Shatrughna held a bejewelled silk umbrella above Rama and Sita. Sugriva stood by the side of Rama, gently fanning him.

It was a memorable day for Ayodhya. It saw the consummation of the people's wish they had expressed fourteen years ago. Rama had accepted exile as wished by his father. He had now returned to Ayodhya after fulfilling his vow to his father. There

could not have been a better occasion for the *devas* to shower their blessings from the heavens above.

After the coronation ceremony, Rama began distributing charities to several people. He also gave gifts to many. To Sita he gave a necklace inlaid with precious stones and told her that she could, in turn, gift it to anyone of her choice. She turned to Hanuman, who accepted the gift with due reverence.

Rama ruled the kingdom with Bharata as the crown prince. That marked the birth of Ramrajya.

— To continue

**He who gives quickly gives twice.
Hold a true friend with both hands.**

Humiliation by Britain Honour in India

"I was humiliated by the British in India, but the Indian people have crowned me with high honour."

Evidently, this remark must have come from a foreigner, who was none other than Annie Besant. She was born in England, but long before she came to India, she had started calling this country her motherland. The remark came when she was chosen to preside over the December 1917 session in Calcutta of the Indian National Congress. Seventy-year-old Annie Besant was the first woman to be the Congress President (Sarojini Naidu and Indira Gandhi headed the party subsequently).

Daughter of an Englishman and an Irish woman, Annie wished to be more than a housewife. Her writings led her to Charles Bradlaugh, leader of the Free Thinker movement. Later the famous playwright, George Bernard Shaw, introduced her to the Fabian Society, which urged the government to improve the lot of the poor and the



downtrodden in Britain and in her colonies. India was then a British colony.

Four years later, she joined the Theosophical Society. She was drawn to its objective of founding Universal Brotherhood without distinction of race or creed. It was theosophy that brought Annie Besant to India in 1893—a hundred years ago. With her came the Theosophical Society, which established its headquarters in Adyar, Madras. She became its President, too.

Even as a young girl, it appears, Annie firmly believed, she had an earlier "incarnation" in India before her birth in 1847 (October 1). A leading publisher in England had started a series of books called the Young Folks Library. He asked Annie to write some stories for children, and her first story was titled *Ganga and the River Maid!*

The moment she arrived in her 'motherland', Annie Besant discarded her English dress and took to wearing the *sari*. She started learning Sanskrit and soon she was able to translate the *Bhagavad Gita* into English for the benefit of the young boys and girls who came to her in Adyar. Till the headquarters building came up, she "lived with Indians, and lived as one of them". She would sit cross-legged on the floor and eat with her fingers, without using spoons and forks.

Being aware of the political, economic, and social deterioration among the Indians at that time, she gave the utmost importance to education and started the Central Hindu College in Banaras (now Varanasi) on the banks of the Ganga. And once it was firmly established, she handed its control to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, who later converted it into the Banaras Hindu University.

Annie Besant entered the Indian political scene in 1913, by starting a weekly called *Commonweal* and then launching a daily *New India*. In her writings, she promoted the self-rule movement for India. In 1914, the First World War broke out and Britain needed the support of Indians. Annie Besant, through her newspaper, asked Britain to grant home rule to India. She started the Home Rule League. The British administration harassed her by demanding heavy security deposits from her paper. It also filed a case against her in court, besides ordering 'house arrest' for her. The Home Rule agitation gathered momentum. A British member of Parliament observed: "When Lord Siva cut his wife into 51 pieces, he found he had 51 wives!" India had any number of Annie Besants to take up the agitation. They also demanded the unconditional "release" of Annie Besant. This came about in September 1917.

Her choice as the President of the Congress session in December was just natural. "All that I have and am, I lay on the altar of the Mother, and together we shall cry, *Vande Mataram!*" she said in her Presidential address.



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**SUPER
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Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail it to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 100/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The Prize for Sep'93 goes to:-
Miss Sharada Karry,
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The winning entry: "Take me", "Leave me"

PICKS FROM THE WISE

What hands have built, hands can pull down.

—Schiller

If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him.

—Voltaire

Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet.

—Rousseau



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